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SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE, FLORENCE

(From a photograph by Alinari)

"Lady Domitzia
Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you remember;
That is his fancy how a Moorish front
Might join to, and complete, the body, — a sketch, —
And again where the cloak hangs, yonder in the shadow."
— Luria.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY LURIA A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES BY CHARLOTTE PORTER AND HELEN A. CLARKE

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INTRODUCTION

If a prophet of movement in literary art could will into existence what would please him most in a drama, as an excellence peculiar to the present epoch and almost altogether novel to preceding periods of dramatic art, however supreme otherwise, what would his forecast be? He might realize that a view of human life as a consecutive and formative social whole, unnarrowed by the contemporaneous or racial horizon, being a view not opened to the genius of an Æschylus or a Shakespeare, could surround the interplay of individual character and passion with a new atmosphere, and inspire with fresh breath the modern dramatic world he would choose to call into being.

Such an atmosphere, offspring of a sense of the larger social unity to which other lives and races contribute, arches its wide dome above each mimic human world imagined in the five plays contained in this volume. They are all social plays, in a modern sense. The interaction of the persons of the drama, and the exploitation of the dramatic material by means of the plot, however vital and interesting these narrower circuits by themselves may be, are contained within an envelope of larger historical suggestion, either of religious or political or conventional movement. This larger suggestion of historical movement is religious in "The Return of the Druses," conventional in "A Blot in the

'Scutcheon" and "Colombe's Birthday," political in "Luria" and "A Soul's Tragedy;" but in all it is fused with the narrower movement of plot and character betraying it, by a dramaturgy distinguishing the structure as well as the general effect of these plays from the work of preceding dramatists.

Within the last decade there has been a tendency in modern novels and plays to make use of some part of the material which the life of Christ offers the literary artist. But neither Sudermann in his "Johannes," nor the Belgian-French narrators of picturesque Biblical episodes, nor the American and British novelists who have either re-told the story of Jesus, or re-imagined it under the mask of some kindred life, have ventured to treat the idea of divine incarnation in so broad a manner, coordinating it with similar racial ideas, as Browning did, nearly sixty years ago, in "The Return of the Druses."

The dramatic material of this play may be broadly characterized as that furnished by the idea of the Incarnation. The action turns upon the conception of the Hakeem held by the Druses and the Christians in the play; and, more essentially, upon the sceptical conflict of this conception in the minds of the inner group of characters, Loys, Djabal, and Anael, with their personal emotional experience of love. The counter influence of these two forces upon these three central personalities determines the action through the relations of the characters to one another, and thus governs the course of their lives and the outcome of the plot.

In the first act, the exultation of the initiate Druses, swayed by the fervor of their implicit be-

lief in the Hakeem and in their deliverance through him, finds the gross outlet proper to it. This Khalil's purer and more strenuous faith is able to deflect in the interest of the plot now opening out before the audience. Loys' return, just as their Prefect is coming back to the net the conspirators have spread for him, foreshadows in its instant effect upon Khalil and Ayoob the action of an alien against their schemes, one whose Christian ideas run counter to their conception of the Hakeem, and whose whole influence will affect the plot more vitally than they can possibly suspect, not merely through the news he brings, but through his dawning love for Anael, which will, indeed, delay him from telling his news till the fourth act precipitates it. The embarrassment they feel Loys may be to them is obvious at once, in Karshook's stealthy proposal to stab him; Khalil's more humane policy saves him to make trouble for them and preserve the dramatist an essential element of influence in his play, much as, in Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," Brutus's humane method with Mark Antony saved Cæsar's champion to make trouble for the anti-Cæsar party, and preserve an important factor in the after-plot.

With Djabal and with Anael the second act shows the conflict going on between the conception of the Incarnation they consider themselves bound to accept and the personal experience of love through which each is passing. To Djabal it is a contest between the obligations forced upon him by the labors of a lifetime — all leading the way events are now pulling him as fatally as if they were not of his own causing — and a new loyalty to truth, begotten in him by the very love whose

loss he fears must be the price of his fidelity to its loss he fears must be the price of his fidelity to its light. He grows beneath the shaping hand of his own requirements. Although not strong enough to meet them fully, his love for Anael helps him so far that he decides to refrain from satisfying his love for her, and to forego his vengeance for his family's wrongs, if so he may preserve intact her love for him. The clarifying frankness of Loys is his main dread. When he learns that he has returned, the more imminent danger is the influence of his scorn upon the belief of the Druses. To Anael the conflict is between an imagined divine love and an actual human one for whose self-sufficingness she takes herself to task. The doubt she meets is within herself. The external doubts Djabal is fearing become for him a purifying process. For Anael the process of doubt is an illuminating one. For both, the opening in events pushing them to this discipline turns upon Loys's presence. Anael's scepticism drives her now to a test of the divinity she would fain accept. If the humanity she loves is divine, it may stand comparison with the undoubted humanity of Loys which has most incited her secret criticism. The plot thus proceeds another step. Anael, verifying by her interview with Loys not her faith but her doubt, is cost upon still another many demonstrate attempts. is cast upon still another more desperate attempt to justify her creed. Loys, by his love and confidence in its return which this interview elicits, is brought into a similar position of conflict between his vows as a Christian knight and his loyalty to his actual experience. He goes to find some way to reconcile them. Anael seeks a last inspiration from Djabal before undertaking the secret assassination of the Prefect which is to constitute her

second ardent test of faith. Djabal seeks a last farewell before following out his self-sacrificing resolve. Meanwhile the external events of the third act crowd to the fore in this drama, and push the characters to action. These incidents are alone exciting enough to make up all the action of an ordinary play. The approach of the Prefect to his doom; the arrival, to follow on top of that, and in the midst of a successful revolt, of the Nuncio to assert his ineffective rule; and finally, the landing of the Venetian admiral to sanction the Druse success now poising in the tick of a minute's deed, — all this more external thread of plot-action is relentlessly pressing upon the cross-purposed plans of the three central characters which make up the second thread of character-action. Such characteraction as this dominates only the intenser plays of Shakespeare, of which "Macbeth" is the most notable example. And this second thread of character-action is intermingled with still another, the like of which it would not be easy to find in dramatic work carlier than Browning's — the thread of larger social action, woven in this play of racial differences which before the persons of the play were born or its incidents set in train, predetermined the form of the religious idea of the Incarnation with which, in one way or another, both characters and plot are here brought into fruitful conflict.

This clash comes in the fourth act, through the dauntless intellectual energy and moral courage

of Anael.

Djabal's new resolve has yielded before the ruthless march of events. Loys, also, has let events decide his course for him. Anael alone,—

partly, by virtue of her supreme position at the heart of the events circling and intersecting about her, but mainly because she is worthy of her innermost place at the very *nodus* of the three interweaving threads of plot, character, and social action, that larger social action, namely, which in this play is religious, — Anael alone acts out with purc and pauseless ardor the dreadful deed her conscious spirit has decreed itself to do. And that deed the killing of the Prefect, on which the freeing of her people, the exaltation of Djabal as the Hakeem, and the solution of her own doubts depend, unmasking Djabal to her, and leading her to abjure his falsity and ruin his cause by opening the great doors to his enemies and his unprepared friends, the uninitiate Druses, before his success is ripe, and which seems, in the fourth act, to have spoiled everything, is the very means of saving, in the fifth act, the whole dramatic action.

In the scheme of religion held by the Druses of the revelation of the divine to mankind, through the incarnation of the Hakeem, an attendant prophet, called the Hamza and typifying the Universal Intelligence, was essential to the completion of the revelation. This office of a representative mediating influence, capable of comprehending the divine and opening out the pathways of its operation among men, Anael fulfils in this drama. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., referring in his paper on "The Return of the Druses," in "The Boston Browning Society Papers," to this idea of the Druses that the Universal Intelligence appeared at each successive incarnation of the Deity, says that it had occurred to him "that Browning may have had this in mind when he introduces Khalil in

the play as the companion of Djabal, though I do not remember anything that would actually indicate it." There is, perhaps, nothing in the play to indicate that Browning himself had this in mind as a part of his own dramatic design; but there is a word in the play which does indicate that he knew Khalil would be to others the obvious person to fill the office of Djabal's Hamza. This word is put in the mouth of one of the uninitiated Druses at the opening of the fifth act (line 8). In the hubbub of the various voices of the people tumultuously surging into the Hall, one of the snatches of talk rising to the top is, "But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?" followed by the satirical rejoinder, "Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves." For the external part of the office of Hamza, the disinterested and faithful Khalil is indeed well fitted. But it is like Browning's subtle irony to make the popular voice settle upon Khalil as the representative of that Universal Intelligence whose human wisdom is so important a factor in the institution of each revelation of the Divine among men, giving to the *rôle* of passive credulity which Khalil plays throughout the piece the superior place clearly belonging to that one who performs in the action the real function of attesting strenuously an ardent and aspiring faith. Anael actually creates by her steadfast scepticism the situation signalized by the pouring of the mob into the palace, one of whom Browning makes thus unwitting of the

source of the influence carrying him along with it.
So many "necessary questions" of the plays bearing on the interpretation of their artistic design considered as a coherent totality, press

upon the perforcedly restricted space of these Introductions that many lesser points of artistic finish, as well as matters wider of the theme, must fall outside of the plan of critical elucidation of the work itself selected as most desirable for this edition. Yet, before passing on to a sketch of the poet's method of solving, in the fifth act, his three interwoven plots of incidents and characters and religious progress, one of the powerful and felicitous metaphorical passages with which Browning gems his great crises may be briefly dwelt upon.

No one can withhold the thrill due to the splendid surprise of the situation when Djabal, expecting to consummate his fate and slay the Prefect, dashes the arras aside and sees Anael there. But only that reader who unifies the vital religious movement of the play with the movement of character and incident displaying it, or that actress of the modern drama who will some day rise to make the world see and feel its tragic force, can fully appreciate the deeply dramatic beauty of the curse wherewith the Human Intelligence in the person of this intensely real and loving Anael, delicate of flesh and overwrought of nerve, yet thrilled to the soul with the moral energy inspiriting her sickening deed, curses her inefficient God:—

"Hakeem would save me. Thou art Djabal. Crouch!
Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!
The pilc of thee I reared up to the cloud—
Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,
Based on the living rock, devoured not by
The unstable desert's jaws of sand,—falls prone.
Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there
A ruin, obscene creatures will moan through."

The alternate breaking down over the physical horror of the blood, and crying out in weak dependence upon the Hakeem to sustain her with the sudden splendor of his divine strength, finds a rushing outlet for Anael's new-fledged independence in this uncompromising expression of an illusion recognized and abjured at one breath. The image called up is that of some gigantic rock-statue of a god fabled to echo with music and shine with sudden spiring flames, like the huge and hoary stone of Jupiter Ammon, in the oasis of Siwah in the desert near Cairo, the seat of the founder of the Druse religion. Anael's faith had built up so against the sky, and girt about with dead symbols of her race's ideals, the mighty structure of a present Hakeem, sacred from the touch that shifts all humanly based permanence. Now she sees her idol crumble, and herself bids it down, to lie there, prowled about by beasts in most ignoble degradation. This desert-born metaphor is as vivid a flash of light on the crisis between the two lovers and on the religious movement which their relations to each other reveal, as Djabal's sudden discovery of Anael instead of the Prefect is to him, and in the more external illumination of the plot of incident.

At the close of this exciting act pushing thus mightily against Djabal's success, and ranging Loys openly, also, as a representative of the Cross, against the assumptions of the Hakeem, the issue is still held in suspense, just as it should be in a fourth act. Despite the Nuncio's arrival to reinforce the anti-Hakeem side of the plot, the scale dips Druseward again at the opening of the final act. The cunning attempts of the slippery prelate

to sap the credulity of the Druses only evokes Djabal's fiery force of will against it. One magnetic instant suffices to rally the frightened Orientals, and the arrival of the Venetian fleet in the harbor is the argument potent to dishearten the well-nigh desperate wiles of the emissary from the Occidental Church. Again, all hangs upon Anael. She, the one Druse able to accuse Djabal, is the one Druse capable of transcending the potential Hakeemship within him and of centring about herself the events, the characters, and the religious movement of the drama. The loyal Khalil himself movement of the drama. The loyal Khalil himself defiantly unveils this traitorous Druse, and reveals—his sister. Loys, jubilant, renounces vows and birthright, and claims her love as his; but Djabal, loving as he never loved before, renounces life itself and every claim upon her but his just doom, thus working out in his own soul his purification. The culminating outcome of the play is ripe now for summing up, through Anael's insight, in her one last word, her revelation to men of the divine mystery of the Incornation which is the divine mystery of the Incarnation which is the motive of the drama—"HAKEEM!" Each interprets it after his own blind fashion. The Druses and poor Khalil, too, with his piteous prayer to Hakeem to restore his sister to life, all see in it the most unequivocal witness to Djabal's divinity. The Nuncio, well aware of the relativities governing the aspects of a power he also sees the practical force of here well enough, turns upon the men who seize him now, with the grimly humorous wish that they were at Rhodes. There another standard would authorize a different view of the situation. Djabal, about to declare the truth he is now strong enough of soul to confess publicly,

sees suddenly in the look of those about him that they would falsely dress his true confession, and a new apprehension strikes him of the inner truth of his career as it stands — the uplifting office of the Hakeem, which he as man, without being Hakeem, has fulfilled. This, therefore, he expresses, finishing his work by deputing it to Khalil and to Loys, electrifying his tribe with the intense expression of his aim for them, just as the Admiral's entrance adds to the spectacle which the group presents; and then he does, in very deed, exalt himself finally in his death and free his soul to press toward Anael's.

The final effect of this religious over-plot is much as if the poet had worked out in dramatic embodiment a conflict between two ideas of the Incarnation, one believing, and one sceptical, in order to merge them in a third resultant idea still more deeply religious, and yet the riper fruit of scepticism; such as he afterwards expressed in a lyrical form in the person of David, Renan, and a Third Speaker, in the Epilogue to "Dramatis Personæ." To Anael and to Djabal, at any rate, one may see in this drama how some such fruitage of their lives' stress and their minds' scrutiny came as to the "Third Speaker" in that Epilogue. Instead of their cruder belief or their awakened disbelief of any present efficacy and truth in an energy of loving deity, lost now in the deeps of a doubtful past, the presence of that energy was reaffirmed within themselves, —

[&]quot;Why, where's the need of Temple, when the walls O' the world are that? What use of swells and falls From Levites' choir, Priests' cries, and trumpet calls? That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,

Or decomposes but to recompose — Become my universe that feels and knows."

It remained for Browning to put this condensation of movement in a religious idea in dramatic form, in a play trembling with the onrush of successive events, and mobile with the cross-play of human

impressions, impulses, and influences.

"The Return of the Druses" illustrates the dramatic embodiment of a large socially significant over-movement more perfectly perhaps than any other of the plays in this volume, a fact which may justify the choice of it in this Introduction for so full a discussion. As a generic piece of Browning's dramatic workmanship, it is also noticeable for the completeness with which it incorporates with the underlying motive revealed through personality, the more usual stage interests of telling character-progression, and of mere plot — surpris-

ing situation and effective spectacle.

Only its stage-production by actors skilled in their art and capable of that appreciation of the evolution of literary art which the proper impersonation of such a play requires could fitly exemplify the rich opportunities it incidentally offers for those lightning strokes of gesture and expression, cleaving through the stage crust to the living mood of the moment, that in the theatre look so simple and are so perfectly premeditated. One instance: Anael is showing Djabal the blood on her dagger when she would have him claim as really his the deed he so unknowingly inspired her to accomplish. Her tone of eager, horror-struck, but almost child-like exposition of the fact: "His blood all this!" must suddenly hush and change

as her eyes catch sight of some ghastly spread of blood, unseen before, upon her bridal robes, to which she turns with a sidelong sweep of the delicate arm that still poises the dagger, as she adds, "and — and more!" with utter sickening breakdown of voice and bearing. "Sustain me, Djabal!" is her next cry, and then with clamoring despera-

tion, "Wait not — now let flash thy glory!"

This tremendous scene of the enlightenment of Djabal — his "punishment," he calls it — through Anael's deed, and of her consequent disillusion, by his confession, from any faith in his supernatural powers, is, in some respects of stage action, a counterpart of the awful scene between Lady Macbeth and the Thane of Cawdor after Duncan's murder. Yet how thoroughly and unimitatively is it reconstructed on opposite lines by the most original English pupil of the great Elizabethan wizard! Here it is the man who has tempted the woman, though unwittingly, to the deed both desire accomplished, though from no selfish motive. Here, as also in "Macbeth," after it is done, the woman is the less deaf to the call of the outer world upon them both, and would persistently urge the man away from the apathy that holds him. While the fateful knocking at the castledoor shouts for concealment, Lady Macbeth frantically pulls at the benumbed man and hales him off to avoid detection. As if stirred to it by the warning of her own quick imagination and pure insight against the degradation of the imposture upon the people it professes to save, Anael, as soon as she knows the truth, regards the godship as worse than a ruin — a destined haunt of vileness "obscene creatures will moan through," and with

voice and hand she sets upon Djabal, beseeching him, with all the might of her love, to reveal the

truth publicly.

After this revelation of the instant spiritual courage of Anael, who is clearly the most glorious example of Browning's early power to create a woman nature unerringly intelligent in decision and uncompromisingly swift in action, it is hard to believe that Mr. Arthur Symons is right, admirable as his critical appreciation generally is, when he supposes that Anael, at the climax of the spiritual energy her repeated intrepidity must have induced in her character, denied her nature and abandoned her fiercely tested fealty to the truth, in order to deceive her people and serve her lover's baser tendency with her dying breath. Mr. Symons considers her cry, "Hakem!" to be a "divine and adorable self-sacrifice of truth," reminding one of Desdemona's "Nobody: I, myself!" But this lovely lie of the super-subtle Venetian was a white lie. By it she forswore vengeance for a crime against herself, which, after all, attested the passion for her of a jealous lover. It was, moreover, a pitying lie, thoroughly in keeping with Desdemona's gentle nature and shrinking nerves as shown in the matter of her other lie about the handkerchief, and elsewhere throughout the play. And this, it is to be observed, is the main point, the question not being one of abstract morality nor of ideal preference as an act befitting a woman, but of dramatic truth to the character portrayed. It would be a direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the stopless course of this fiery strongsouled Syrian maiden if her final word was a knowing lie. The circumstances also involving socially

and religiously so much more than in Desdemona's case would make such a lie not white but black. After all, it was her death, not her exclamation, that made the Druses grovel, and that could scarcely be intentional. The uncalculated effect of a genuine utterance accounts perfectly for the deception, dramatically fit and necessary to loosen all the knots of plot and character and religious motive. The contrast between Christian and Druse ideas is not left pointless by this interpretation, and the conflict between faith and doubt in the play is solved in a mode characteristic of Browning's view of human Love as the type of the divine, if Anael's exclamation is supposed to be for her the perception of a supreme truth, an intuitive vision flashed upon her shining eyes of the Divinity incarnate in the pure power of a human love so flawless as Djabal's has at last become.

The field of social movement is much narrower in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" and but a little less so in "Colombe's Birthday." Love is still the mastermotive of the action. In the "Blot," it overpowers conventional notions of Honor and Vengeance. In "Colombe" it struggles toward supremacy against the conventional habit of mind that exalts social rank and political dominion above it. But in both of these plays the love is personal, and, instead of running unitedly along with love shown in social service, as in "The Return of the Druses" to set free an enslaved people; and also with love shown as religious fervor, symbolically universal in its range and meaning, it is chosen to be shown as detaching itself from wide social relations withdrawing from harsh contact with a troublesome world. Still, even in these plays in which

personal love is isolatedly dominant, it is not presented without suggestive reference to that historic social atmosphere which distinguishes Browning's dramatic work in this volume from almost all

dramatic work preceding his.

Instead of Browning's characters being "not in the world, but in some section cut out of it," as Professor Henry Jones declares, they are more largely related to a world-environment than the characters in a specific plot are wont to be. It is true that this larger world-environment is synthetically conceived and representatively or typically suggested. Not only character in the individual but characteristics of an epoch are presented as living processes having a flowing continuous unity. Therefore, although Browning himself may have a prevailing manner of interpreting life, it is not one so easy to define as people ordinarily suppose; and since it is, whatever else it may be, an interpretation of life, social and individual, as in flux, it is utterly impossible for him either to state or to make his characters embody the absolute moral teaching attributed to him by Professor Henry Jones and other writers on Browning's dramas.

The interest comes apparently nearer to being simply moral, in the ordinary sense of the word, in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon' than in any other of these plays. "Honor" is the subject of the story for Lord Tresham, and his moral assumption and the reflex of his moral view and that of the world upon his young sister, Lady Mildred, and her youthful lover, Lord Mertoun, who try by an honestly meant deception to efface the blot their true but impassioned love has brought upon the escutcheon of the house of Tresham, brings all

three to a tragic end. The successive steps that bring about the tragedy are the premature exposure of the secret intimacy of the lovers; the overwrought shame and self-reproach of Mildred, who refuses to incriminate the Earl by confessing his name; and the blind cry for vengeance of Tresham's traditional sense of family probity which hounds him on, after he knows the whole truth, to kill the Earl and poison himself.

The ideals of an English nobleman of the eighteenth century for his house are here depicted at their highest reach in a man of courteous and gentle nature and lofty aims, and then to this modern paladin of whatsoever things are lovely and of good report comes the maddening moment when the exclusive possession of virtue in his line may be questioned. Then the lurking slavishness of such a moral ideal is laid bare. Tresham, cultured of brain and conscience as he is, finds himself witlessly scourged by his family Eumenides, till he fancies the elemental forces of primitive nature have power to drive him about in his ancestral grounds, pushing him with sinister suggestion to the deed he dreads but does. The "dells and bosky paths which used to lead" him, now bewilder him, -

"The blackest shade

Breaks up, the thronged trunks of the trees ope wide, the very river put

Its arm about me and conducted me

To this detested spot. Why then, I'll shun Their will no longer: do your will with me!

Woods, river, plains, I catch your meaning now, And I obey you!"

Again, at the close of the same scene, the beauty of the passage that makes the hoary yew-trees of his park haunt the accomplished vengeance of this tortured nobleman, is a rare touch of poetic symbolism appropriately linking the woe of the archetypal house of Agamemnon with this modern Fury-ridden pride of family,—

"Dear and ancient trees
My fathers planted, and I loved so well!
What have I done that, like some fabled crime
Of yore, lets loose a Fury leading thus
Her miserable dance amidst you all?
Oh, nevermore for me shall winds intone
With all your tops a vast antiphony,
Demanding and responding in God's praise!
Hers ye are now, not mine!"

Of the pathos of Mildred's self-accusation, the pitifulness of her one excuse —

"I was so young, I loved him so, I had No mother, God forgot me, and I fell"—

much has been said. But how little of the angelic understanding of her last nobler words! Then, her enlightened spirit, advancing from its meeker posture of shame and penitence under the weight of the influence upon her of her brother's code, and her own native hatred of deception falls into the background of her past, and she fronts her lover's death and her brother's anguish with the strength that is able to help. The light of a higher judgment than that which has cursed her emboldens her dying lips "not to forgive" but "to bless" her wretched brother from her "soul of souls."

Mertoun, also liberated at last from the undue

influence upon him of Tresham's example of all excellence to imitate, rightly gains a new manliness of judgment, and fervor of love, while his life is ebbing away beneath the yew-trees, to add to the high-mindedness so constrainedly expressed in his ceremonious visit of proposal for Mildred's hand, and the docile tenderness of the love-scene in Mildred's chamber.

Guendolen's loyal belief in her cousin has been well likened by Mr. Arthur Symons to Beatrice's defence of Hero in "Much Ado about Nothing;" but whether she comes up to Beatrice or not in the playful humor with which she lightens the tragic load of the play, she is evidently made after her own pattern and no other, except Balaustion or some modern woman not yet put in a book, in her rapid intuitions into character and motive. No wonder Mildred's apparently shameless guilt is transparent purity to her quick guess, and no wonder the obtuse, blundering, good English fellow, Austin, submits himself to her judgment. It is the best proof of his sense that he could furnish. Her penetrating intelligence is the real guaranty that she will know how to apply on occasion the warning Tresham's life embodies: "Vengeance is God's, not man's. Remember me!" It is an echo from "Hamlet," catching up the sonorous ancient phrase from that marvellous drama of revenge as a family duty, to reverberate a newer message of individual responsibility. Of the unexacting and unobtrusive yet not unpersuasive morality of that message, this play can alone be justly convicted.

Over the conventional ideas belonging to a larger circle of life and rank, and spreading out in

vista from a petty throne, in dispute, to the almost supreme dominion of a Germanic Cæsar of the seventeenth century, in prospect, love is victorious in "Colombe's Birthday." This is Browning's one flawlessly happy comedy of love. It is guiltless of a deeper sigh than that the candidate for Charlemagne's crown finds a moment to utter in pure envy of the happier lot of Colombe and Valence.

Whoever has seen Julia Marlowe Taber play the part of the girl-queen entering upon her kingdom of exuberant happiness in love, will want no other way than hers of telling the story of what happened on her birthday. As she played it, Colombe's part was to unfold like a flower in grace and love and joy as she more and more fully exercised and made known her clear perceptions of that rare evolution of power and love in Valence which she tested, and saw tested, and at last herself openly confirmed and ratified. She was never fooled into feeling, for example, in the love scene of the fourth act, that Valence really loved any other person than Colombe of Ravestein. The audience had, as the poet doubtless meant it should have, the same species of double pleasure that it has in the wooing scene between Rosalind and Orlando — the pleasure of seeing Valence fooled to the top of his desire - blissfully tested, tormented, and enticed, and the pleasure of seeing as clearly the tender love behind the Duchess's mask of playful dignity lur-ing him on to the unequivocal declaration in which she secretly glories.

Colombe's character is expanded by means of the action; but it is not also made to cause the action, as Anael's is. Her lover's character, however, is not only educed by the course of events, it is itself the centre of the activity of the play. Valence stands for the victory which the psychical force of a love capable of refining itself by every adverse or fortunate incident is predestined to win over the sluggish ability of Berthold, and the baser materialism of the courtier-group. On this intellectual and spiritual ardor of Valence Robert

Taber set the due emphasis.

Valence's entranee upon the court-eirele is that of a real man among men made puppets by their idle aims in life. These courtiers, whose limp hands fling the action into the advocate's earnest grasp, represent among themselves the various phases of polite low-mindedness possible to the materialistic view of life, without departing in the least — do they need to? — from the true patterns of every day. When they shift their irksome burden of telling the Duchess her bad news, they shift upon Valenee's strong shoulders the burden of the triumph which is to accompany his growth of capacity under responsibility, and prove the superiority of spiritual energy over smug flesh and blood, and even over uninspired intellectual ability.

The plot centres still more closely upon a single personality in "Luria," the heart of the dramatic issue being even more bound up in the development of Luria than in that of Valence. The dramatist in Browning, shut out from stage display, is becoming one with the poet in him, and his hand is eramping its force to an artistic condensation of effects; the union of dramatic and poetic capacity inventing a new mode for its activity in the great monologues to follow "this last attempt for the present at dramatic poetry." The interest, however, is not less far-reaching, and the historical-social atmos-

phere, already remarked as most fully exemplified in "The Return of the Druses," but not absent from "A Blot" or "Colombe," is again a noticeable element of this drama. The dramatic conflict of "Luria" is, in fact, between individual right and corporate exactions, between Luria and Florence. "A Soul's Tragedy" is, practically, a pendent piece, supplementing the larger drama by picturing the same general theme in other aspects. It has a similar political-social interest, and a corresponding individual and social conflict. It presents, however, a reverse phase of the issue between Luria and Florence, Chiappino being represented as subordinating the people to his ambitious welfare, as Florence, acting through Braccio is represented as subordinating Luria; and Chiappino's course of calculation based on selfishness and distrust of human nature being the counterpart of the Florentine policy against which Luria's enthusiasm and

persistent policy of faith in good prevail.

"Luria," as a whole, has the peculiar interest of being virtually a criticism of Florence as a state. It incidentally demonstrates the strength and the weakness finally leading to the downfall of that singularly illustrious Italian city. Its warrant as criticism is to be found in the tedious details and combined showing of the facts of history, yet it is here enfolded in a brilliant poetic drama, with all the synthetic unity of a world-poet's insight into

a multitudinous phenomenon.

The way in which this dramatic structure is built to afford views over these wide social horizons reminds the reader of "Strafford," and especially of "The Return of the Druses." Not only is Braccio painted as the type and mouthpiece of Florence and the embodiment, as Professor H. M. Pancoast was the first to suggest, of the policy identified with Machiavelli, — not only are Domizia and Puccio made to represent characteristic Florentines, in the same way as in "Strafford" Pym and his party were identified with the People's movement, and Strafford with the Royal opposition, — but this whole play, "Luria," also suggests, as "The Return of the Druses" does, a conflict and contrast of racial ideals and tendencies. A synthesis of the Oriental habit of mind is brought into the Italian drama to supplement and perfect with its believing ardor the colder mental processes of the Occidental habitude. And this not simply in Luria's person, but in the conscious visions that inspire his course and straighten the tangles of the plot.

If Browning were stiff and unreal in these prodigious synthetic embodiments of historic epochs and racial or civic traits along with the interplay of character and impulsion of events; or if these new dramatic elements stood out over-prominently and failed to throw the human interest into higher relief, he might justly be censured for conquering a new domain at the expense of the old one. Yet the fact is that they have generally escaped remark because the art with which they have been presented is so anti-analytic, their welding with impersonation and plot so thoroughly animated:

The Bishop who orders his tomb at St. Praxed's Church, for instance, to take an accepted example, is none the less human, because Browning has had the dramatic skill plus the historic sense to portray the Italian prelate as so perfectly typifying the characteristics of the Central Renaissance that a

special student of the period must admiringly acknowledge the revivifying light of the poet's

insight.

With the new effectiveness a new manner of workmanship is to be expected. Study of the diction and metaphors of Browning in the plays in this volume will reveal at once that there is a relation between the quality of the style and the exigencies of dramatic theme. The two plays in which the fervid Oriental element appears, "The Return of the Druses" and "Luria," are much warmer in hue and more impassioned in expression than "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," which is full of specifically English turns of phrase and allusions; while "Colombe's Birthday," in its scenes of romantic purity, contrasts strongly with the snatches of careless colloquy belonging to its courtier's dialogue, and may be again contrasted in its diction, as a whole, with the keen-cyed voluble style of Ogniben and the Italians of "A Soul's Tragedy."

It is obviously in keeping with the dramatic workmanship of one who portrays a sectional bit of life as related with larger phases to make his dramatic movement a humanized and fluent process, not more or perhaps as much dependent on external events as on internal or humanized events, and on the interplay of personal influences. So characteristic a difference in the conception of the life to be expanded in a plot involves a characteristic difference in the explication of its development through the dramatis personæ. In the Greek tragedies, for example, the usual process of plot-development is an on-rushing movement toward an almost mathematically conceived end, since the

fore-shadowed nemesis of the house decrees the predestined issue. In Shakespeare the process is a balanced oscillating movement, rushing downward finally, as in "Macbeth," or rising, as in "The Tempest," toward some goal of reconciliation; since fate has grown, in Shakespeare's dramatic art, into the possession of a conscience, and has become subject to the law of moral choice. In Browning the northern nemesis of conscience has become still more modernized; it has grown under the influence of human desire into human energy, and therefore in Anael and Djabal, in Colombe and Valence, and in Luria, the development of character is an ascending, aspiring process.

It will probably be perceived in due time that it is not fair to say, as almost all writers on Browning's dramas have hitherto reproachfully said, that Browning centres his action in thought. He centres it rather in will. A more active force than action impels the course of his drama, and that is

the initiation of action.

CHARLOTTE PORTER. HELEN A. CLARKE.



THE

RETURN OF THE DRUSES

A TRAGEDY

1843

PERSONS

The Grand-Master's Prefect.
The Patriarch's Nuncio.
The Republic's Admiral.
Loys de Dreux, Knight-Novice.

Initiated Druses — DJABAL, KHALIL, ANAEL, MAANI, KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, and others.

Uninitiated Druses.

Prefect's Guard. Nuncio's Attendants. Admiral's Force.

Тіме, 14—

Place — An Islet of the Southern Sporades, colonized by Druses of Lebanon, and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers of Rhodes.

Scene — A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.

ACT I

Enter stealthily Karshook, Raghib, Ayoob and other initiated Druses, each as he enters casting off a robe that conceals his distinctive black vest and white turban; then, as giving a loose to exultation,—

Karshook. The moon is carried off in purple fire: Day breaks at last! Break glory, with the day,

R. D. — 1

On Djabal's dread incarnate mystery Now ready to resume its pristine shape Of Hakeem, as the Khalif vanished erst In what seemed death to uninstructed eyes, On red Mokattam's verge — our Founder's flesh, As he resumes our Founder's function!

Raahib. Sweep to the Christian Prefect that enslaved

So long us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea! 10 Ayoob. Most joy be thine, O Mother-mount!

Thy brood

Returns to thee, no outcasts as we left. But thus — but thus! Behind, our Prefect's corse; Before, a presence like the morning — thine, Absolute Djabal late, — God Hakeem now

That day breaks!

Karshook. Off then, with disguise at last! As from our forms this hateful garb we strip, Lose every tongue its glozing accent too, Discard each limb the ignoble gesture! Cry, 'T is the Druse Nation, warders on our Mount Of the world's secret, since the birth of time, — No kindred slips, no offsets from thy stock, No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we Who rise . .

Ayoob. Who shout . .

Who seize, a first-fruits, ha — Raghib. Spoil of the spoiler! Brave!

[They begin to tear down, and to dispute for, the decorations of the hall.

Karshook. Hold!

Ayoob. — Mine, I say;

And mine shall it continue!

Karshook. Just this fringe! Take anything beside! Lo, spire on spire,

Curl serpentwise wreathed columns to the top
O' the roof, and hide themselves mysteriously
Among the twinkling lights and darks that haunt
Yon cornice! Where the huge veil, they suspend
Before the Prefect's chamber of delight,
Floats wide, then falls again as if its slave,
The scented air, took heart now, and anon
Lost heart to buoy its breadths of gorgeousness
Above the gloom they droop in — all the porch
Is jewelled o'er with frostwork charactery;
And, see, yon eight-point cross of white flame,
winking

Hoar-silvery like some fresh-broke marble stone:

Raze out the Rhodian cross there, so thou leav'st

This single fringe!

Ayoob. Ha, wouldst thou, dog-fox? Help!

— Three hand-breadths of gold fringe, my son was

set.

To twist, the night he died —

Karshook. Nay, hear the knave!

And I could witness my one daughter borne,
A week since, to the Prefect's couch, yet fold
These arms, be mute, lest word of mine should mar
Our Master's work, delay the Prefect here
A day, prevent his sailing hence for Rhodes—
How know I else? — Hear me denied my right

49
By such a knave!

Raghib [interposing]. Each ravage for himself!
Booty enough! On, Druses! Be there found
Blood and a heap behind us; with us, Djabal
Turned Hakeem; and before us, Lebanon!

Yields the porch? Spare not! There his minions dragged

Thy daughter, Karshook, to the Prefect's couch!

Ayoob! Thy son, to soothe the Prefect's pride, Bent o'er that task, the death-sweat on his brow, Carving the spice-tree's heart in scroll-work there! Onward in Djabal's name!

As the tumult is at height, enter Khalil. A pause and silence.

Khalil. Was it for this,
Djabal hath summoned you? Deserve you thus 60
A portion in to-day's event? What, here—
When most behoves your feet fall soft, your eyes
Sink low, your tongues lie still,— at Djabal's side,
Close in his very hearing, who, perchance
Assumes e'en now God Hakeem's dreaded shape,—
Dispute you for these gauds?

Ayoob. How say'st thou, Khalil?
Doubtless our Master prompts thee! Take the

fringe,

Old Karshook! I supposed it was a day . . .

Khalil. For pillage?

Karshook. Hearken, Khalil! Never spoke A boy so like a song-bird; we avouch thee 70 Prettiest of all our Master's instruments Except thy bright twin-sister; thou and Anael Challenge his prime regard: but we may crave (Such nothings as we be) a portion too Of Djabal's favor; in him we believed, His bound ourselves, him moon by moon obeyed, Kept silence till this daybreak — so, may claim Reward: who grudges me my claim?

Ayoob. To-day

Is not as yesterday!

Raghib. Khalil.

Stand off!

Rebel you?

Must I, the delegate of Djabal, draw
His wrath on you, the day of our Return?

Other Druses. Wrench from their grasp the fringe! Hounds! must the earth

Vomit her plagues on us thro' thee? — and thee?

Plague me not, Khalil, for their fault!

Khalil. Oh, shame!

Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic tribe Who, flying the approach of Osman, bore Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's ridge Its birthplace, hither! "Let the sea divide These hunters from their prey," you said; "and safe

In this dim islet's virgin solitude
Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time
Fan it to fire; till Hakeem rise again,
According to his word that, in the flesh
Which faded on Mokattam ages since,
He, at our extreme need, would interpose,
And, reinstating all in power and bliss,
Lead us himself to Lebanon once more."
Was 't not thus you departed years ago,
Ere I was born?

Druses. 'T was even thus, years ago. 99
Khalil. And did you call — (according to old laws
Which bid us, lest the sacred grow profane,
Assimilate ourselves in outward rites
With strangers fortune makes our lords, and live
As Christian with the Christian, Jew with Jew,
Druse only with the Druses) — did you call
Or no, to stand 'twixt you and Osman's rage
(Mad to pursue e'en hither thro' the sea
The remnant of our tribe), a race self-vowed
To endless warfare with his hordes and him,
The White-cross Knights of the adjacent Isle?

Karshook. And why else rend we down, wrench up, raze out?

These Knights of Rhodes we thus solicited
For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest
Than aught we fled — their Prefect; who began
His promised mere paternal governance
By a prompt massacre of all our Sheikhs
Able to thwart the Order in its scheme
Of crushing, with our nation's memory,
Each chance of our return, and taming us
Bondslaves to Rhodes forever — all, he thinks
To end by this day's treason.

Khalil. Say I not?

You, fitted to the Order's purposes,

Must yet receive one degradation more;

Your Sheikhs cut off, your rites, your garb proscribed,

The Knights at last throw off the mask — transfer, As tributary now and appanage,
This islet they are but protectors of,
To their own ever-craving liege, the Church,
Who licenses all crimes that pay her thus.
You, from their Prefect, were to be consigned (Pursuant of I know not what vile pact)
To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to outvie
His predecessor in all wickedness.
When suddenly rose Djabal in the midst,
Djabal, the man in semblance, but our God

Confessed by signs and portents. Ye saw fire Bicker round Djabal, heard strange music flit Bird-like about his brow?

Druses. We saw — we heard!
Djabal is Hakeem, the incarnate Dread,
The phantasm Khalif, King of Prodigies! 140
Khalil. And as he said has not our Khalif done,

And so disposed events (from land to land Passing invisibly) that when, this morn, The pact of villany complete, there comes This Patriarch's Nuncio with this Master's Prefect Their treason to consummate, — each will face For a crouching handful, an uplifted nation: For simulated Christians, confessed Druses: And, for slaves past hope of the Mother-mount, Freedmen returning there 'neath Venice' flag; That Venice which, the Hospitallers' foe, Grants us from Candia escort home at price Of our relinquished isle, Rhodes counts her own— Venice, whose promised argosies should stand-Toward harbor: is it now that you, and you, And you, selected from the rest to bear The burthen of the Khalif's secret, further To-day's event, entitled by your wrongs, And witness in the Prefect's hall his fate — That you dare clutch these gauds? Ay, drop them! Karshook. Most true, all this; and yet, may one dare hint, Thou art the youngest of us? — though employed Abundantly as Djabal's confidant, Transmitter of his mandates, even now. Much less, whene'er beside him Anael graces The cedar throne, his queen-bride, art thou like To occupy its lowest step that day! Now, Khalil, wert thou checked as thou aspirest, Forbidden such or such an honor, — say, Would silence serve so amply?

Khalil. Karshook thinks 170

I covet honors? Well, nor idly thinks. Honors? I have demanded of them all The greatest.

Karshook. I supposed so.

Khalil. Judge, yourselves!
Turn, thus: 't is in the alcove at the back
Of yonder columned porch, whose entrance now
The veil hides, that our Prefect holds his state,
Receives the Nuncio, when the one, from Rhodes,
The other lands from Syria; there they meet.
Now, I have sued with earnest prayers . . .

Karshook. For what

Shall the Bride's brother vainly sue?

Khalil. That mine —

Avenging in one blow a myriad wrongs

— Might be the hand to slay the Prefect there! Djabal reserves that office for himself. [A silence.

Thus far, as youngest of you all, I speak

— Scarce more enlightened than yourselves; since, near

As I approach him, nearer as I trust
Soon to approach our Master, he reveals
Only the God's power, not the glory yet.
Therefore I reasoned with you: now, as servant
To Djabal, bearing his authority,
Hear me appoint your several posts! Till noon
None see him save myself and Anael: once
The deed achieved, our Khalif, casting off
The embodied Awe's tremendous mystery,
The weakness of the flesh disguise, resumes
His proper glory, nc'er to fade again.

Enter a Druse.

The Druse. Our Prefect lands from Rhodes!—without a sign

That he suspects aught since he left our Isle;
Nor in his train a single guard beyond
The few he sailed with hence: so have we learned
From Loys.

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Karshook. Loys? Is not Loys gone Forever?

Ayoob. Loys, the Frank Knight, returned? The Druse. Loys, the boy, stood on the leading

prow

Conspicuous in his gay attire, and leapt
Into the surf the foremost. Since day-dawn
I kept watch to the Northward; take but note

Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!

Thou, Karshook, with thy company, receive
The Prefect as appointed: see, all keep
The wonted show of servitude: announce
His entry here by the accustomed peal
Of trumpets, then await the further pleasure
Of Djabal! (Loys back, whom Djabal sent
To Rhodes that we might spare the single Knight
Worth sparing!)

Enter a second Druse.

The Druse. I espied it first! Say, I
First spied the Nuncio's galley from the South!
Said'st thou a Crossed-keys' flag would flap the mast?
It nears apace! One galley and no more.
If Djabal chance to ask who spied the flag,
Forget not, I it was!

Khalil. Thou, Ayoob, bring
The Nuncio and his followers hither! Break
One rule prescribed, ye wither in your blood,

Die at your fault!

Enter a third Druse.

The Druse. I shall see home, see home!
— Shall banquet in the sombre groves again!

Hail to thee, Khalil! Venice looms afar; The argosies of Venice, like a cloud, Bear up from Candia in the distance! Khalil. Joy! Summon our people, Raghib! Bid all forth! Tell them the long-kept secret, old and young! Set free the captive, let the trampled raise 230 Their faces from the dust, because at length The cycle is complete, God Hakeem's reign Begins anew! Say, Venice for our guard, Ere night we steer for Syria! Hear you, Druses? Hear you this crowning witness to the claims Of Djabal? Oh, I spoke of hope and fear, Reward and punishment, because he bade Who has the right; for me, what should I say But, mar not those imperial lineaments, No majesty of all that rapt regard 240 Vex by the least omission! Let him rise Without a check from you! Druses. Let Djabal rise!

Enter Loys. — The Druses are silent.

Loys. Who speaks of Djabal? — for I seek him, friends!

[Aside.] Tu Dieu! 'T is as our Isle broke out in song

For joy, its Prefect-incubus drops off To-day, and I succeed him in his rule!

But no — they cannot dream of their good fortune! [Aloud.] Peace to you, Druses! I have tidings for you

But first for Djabal: where 's your tall bewitcher, With that small Arab thin-lipped silver-mouth? 250 Khalil [aside to Karshook]. Loys, in truth! Yet Djabal cannot err!

260

Karshook [to Khalil]. And who takes charge of Loys? That 's forgotten,
Despite thy wariness! Will Loys stand

And see his comrades slaughtered?

How they shrink Loys [aside].

And whisper, with those rapid faces! What?

The sight of me in their oppressors' garb

Strikes terror to the simple tribe? God's shame

On those that bring our Order ill repute!

But all's at end now; better days begin

For these mild mountaineers from over-sea:

The timidest shall have in me no Prefect

To cower at thus! [Aloud.] I asked for Djabal — Better

Karshook [aside] One lured him, ere he can suspect, inside

The corridor; 't were easy to despatch A youngster. [To Loys.] Djabal passed some min-

ntes since

Thro' yonder porch, and . .

Khalil [aside]. Hold! What, him despatch? The only Christian of them all we charge

No tyranny upon? Who, — noblest Knight Of all that learned from time to time their trade

Of lust and cruelty among us, - heir 270

To Europe's pomp, a truest child of pride,—

Yet stood between the Prefect and ourselves

From the beginning? Loys, Djabal makes

Account of, and precisely sent to Rhodes

For safety? I take charge of him!

[To Loys.] Sir Loys,—

Loys. There, cousins! Does Sir Loys strike you dead?

Khalil [advancing]. Djabal has intercourse with few or none

Till noontide: but, your pleasure?

"Intercourse Lous. With few or none?" — (Ah, Khalil, when you spoke I saw not your smooth face! All health! — and health

To Anael! How fares Anael?) — "Intercourse With few or none?" Forget you, I've been friendly

With Djabal long ere you or any Druse?

— Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath The Duke my father's roof! He'd tell by the hour, With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow. Plausiblest stories . .

Khalil. Stories, say you? — Ah,

The quaint attire!

My dress for the last time! Lous. How sad I cannot make you understand, This ermine, o'er a shield, betokens me 290 Of Bretagne, ancientest of provinces And noblest; and, what 's best and oldest there, See, Dreux', our house's blazon, which the Nuncio Tacks to an Hospitaller's vest to-day!

Khalil. The Nuncio we await? What brings

you back

From Rhodes, Sir Loys?

How you island-tribe Forget the world's awake while here you drowse! What brings me back? What should not bring me, rather!

Our Patriarch's Nuncio visits you to-day — Is not my year's probation out? I come 300 To take the knightly vows.

Khalil. What 's that you wear?

Loys. This Rhodian cross? The cross your Prefect wore.

You should have seen, as I saw, the full Chapter Rise, to a man, while they transferred this cross

From that unworthy Prefect's neck to . . . (fool— My secret will escape me!) In a word, My year's probation passed, a Knight ere eve Am I; bound, like the rest, to yield my wealth

To the common stock, to live in chastity, (We Knights espouse alone our Order's fame) - Change this gay weed for the black white-crossed

And fight to death against the Infidel — Not, therefore, against you, you Christians with Such partial difference only as befits

The peacefullest of tribes. But, Khalil, prithee,

Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?

Khalil. Ah, the new sword!

See now! You handle sword Lous. As 't were a camel-staff. Pull! That 's my motto, Annealed "Profide," on the blade in blue.

Khalil. No curve in it? Surely a blade should

curve. Loys. Straight from the wrist! Loose — it should poise itself!

Khalil [waving with irrepressible exultation the sword]. We are a nation, Loys, of old fame

Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep

With the sword too!

[Remembering himself.] But I forget — you bid me

Seek Djabal?

What! A sword's sight scares you not? Loys. (The People I will make of him and them! Oh let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)

Bring Djabal — say, indeed, that come he must! Khalil. At noon seek Djabal in the Prefect's

Chamber,

And find . . . [Aside.] Nay, 't is thy cursed race's 330 token,

Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!
[Aloud.] Tarry, and I will do your bidding, Loys!
[To the rest aside.] Now, forth you! I proceed to Djabal straight.

Leave this poor boy, who knows not what he

says!

Oh will it not add joy to even thy joy,
Djabal, that I report all friends were true?

[Khalil goes, followed by the Druses.

Loys. Tu Dieu! How happy I shall make these

Druses!

Was 't not surpassingly contrived of me
To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,
Then take the first pretence for stealing off
From these poor islanders, present myself
Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,
And (as best proof of ardor in its cause
Which ere to-night will have become, too, mine)
Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,
This Prefect and his villanous career?
The princely Synod! All I dared request
Was his dismissal; and they graciously
Consigned his very office to myself
Myself may cure the Isle diseased!

And well 350

For them, they did so! Since I never felt
How lone a lot, tho' brilliant, I embrace,
Till now that, past retrieval, it is mine.
To live thus, and thus die! Yet, as I leapt
On shore, so home a feeling greeted me
That I could half believe in Djabal's story,
He used to tempt my father with, at Rennes—
And me, too, since the story brought me here—
Of some Count Dreux and ancestor of ours
Who, sick of wandering from Bouillon's war,

360

Left his old name in Lebanon.

At least to spend in the Isle! and, my news known An hour hence, what if Anael turn on me The great black eyes I must forget?

Why, fool, Recall them, then? My business is with Djabal, Not Anael! Djabal tarries: if I seek him?—
The Isle is brighter than its wont to-day.

ACT II

Enter DJABAL.

Djabal. That a strong man should think himself a God!

I—Hakeem? To have wandered through the world, Sown falsehood, and thence reaped now scorn, now faith,

For my one chant with many a change, my tale
Of outrage, and my prayer for vengeance — this
Required, forsooth, no mere man's faculty,
Naught less than Hakeem's? The persuading Loys
To pass probation here; the getting access
By Loys to the Prefect; worst of all,
The gaining my tribe's confidence by fraud
That would disgrace the very Frank, — a few
Of Europe's secrets which subdue the flame,
The wave, — to ply a simple tribe with these,
Took Hakeem?

And I feel this first to-day!

Does the day break, is the hour imminent
When one deed, when my whole life's deed, my deed
Must be accomplished? Hakeem? Why the God?

Shout, rather, "Djabal, Youssof's child, thought slain

With his whole race, the Druses' Sheikhs, this Prefect.

Endeavored to extirpate — saved, a child, 20 Returns from traversing the world, a man, Able to take revenge, lead back the march To Lebanon" — so shout, and who gainsays? But now, because delusion mixed itself Insensibly with this career, all 's changed! Have I brought Venice to afford us convoy? "True — but my jugglings wrought that!" Put I heart

Into our people where no heart lurked? — "Ah.

What cannot an impostor do!"

Not this! Not do this which I do! Not bid avaunt 30 Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy hold on me!

Nor even get a hold on me! 'T is now — This day — hour — minute — 't is as here I stand On the accursed threshold of the Prefect, That I am found deceiving and deceived! And now what do I? — hasten to the few Deceived, ere they deceive the many — shout, "As I professed, I did believe myself! Say, Druses, had you seen a butchery-If Ayoob, Karshook saw — Maani there 40 Must tell you how I saw my father sink; My mother's arms twine still about my neck; I hear my brother shriek, here 's yet the scar Of what was meant for my own death-blow — say, If you had woke like me, grown year by year Out of the tumult in a far-off clime, Would it be wondrous such delusion grew? I walked the world, asked help at every hand;

Came help or no? Not this and this? Which helps When I returned with, found the Prefect here, 50 The Druses here, all here but Hakeem's self, The Khalif of the thousand prophecies, Reserved for such a juncture, — could I call Mymission aught but Hakeem's? Promised Hakeem More than performs the Djabal — you absolve? — Me, you will never shame before the crowd Yet happily ignorant? — Me, both throngs surround,

The few deceived, the many unabused,

— Who, thus surrounded, slay for you and them
The Prefect, lead to Lebanon? No Khalif,

But Sheikh once more! Mere Djabal — not"...

Enter Khalil hastily.

*T is told! The whole Druse nation knows thee,

Hakeem,

As we! and mothers lift on high their babes
Who seem aware, so glisten their great eyes,
Thou hast not failed us; ancient brows are proud;
Our elders could not earlier dic, it seems,
Than at thy coming! The Druse heart is thinc!
Take it! my lord and theirs, be thou adored!

Djabal [aside]. Adored! — but I renounce it utterly!

Khalil. Already are they instituting choirs

And dances to the Khalif, as of old

'T is chronicled thou bad'st them.

Djabal [aside]. I abjure it!
'T is not mine — not for me!

Khalil. Why pour they wine Flavored like honey and bruised mountain-herbs, Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit?

Oh, let me tell thee — Esaad, we supposed
Doting, is carried forth, eager to see
The last sun rise on the Isle: he can see now!
The shamed Druse women never wept before:
They can look up when we reach home, they say. 80
Smell! — sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast thus
long —

Sweet! — it grows wild in Lebanon. And I
Alone do nothing for thee! 'T is my office
Just to announce what well thou know'st — but

thus

Thou bidst me. At this self-same moment tend The Prefect, Nuncio and the Admiral Hither by their three sea-paths: nor forget Who were the trusty watchers! — thou forget? Like me, who do forget that Anael bade . . .

Djabal [aside]. Ay, Anael, Anael — is that said

Louder than all, that would be said, I knew!
What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,
To the people? Till that woman crossed my path,
On went I, solely for my people's sake:
I saw here, and I then first saw myself,
And slackened pace: "if I should prove indeed
Hakeem — with Anael by!"

Khalil [aside]. Ah, he is rapt!

Dare I at such a moment break on him Even to do my sister's bidding? Yes:

The eyes are Djabal's and not Hakeem's yet, 100 Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.

Djabal [aside]. To yearn to tell her, and yet

have no one

Great heart's word that will tell her! I could gasp Doubtless one such word out, and die.

[Aloud.] You said

That Anael . . .

Khalil. . . . Fain would see thee, speak with thee, Before thou change, discard this Djabal's shape She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know. Something to say that will not from her mind! I know not what — "Let him but come!" she said.

Djabal [half-apart]. My nation — all my Druses — how fare they?

Those I must save, and suffer thus to save,

Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif too?

Khalil. All at the signal pant to flock around

That banner of a brow!

Djabal [aside]. And when they flock, Confess them this: and after, for reward, Be chased with howlings to her feet perchance!— Have the poor outraged Druses, deaf and blind, Precede me there, forestall my story there, Tell it in mocks and jeers!

I lose myself.
Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now?

I need the veriest child — why not this child?

[Turning abruptly to Khalil.

You are a Druse too, Khalil; you were nourished Like Anael with our mysteries: if she Could vow, so nourished, to love only one Who should avenge the Druses, whence proceeds Your silence? Wherefore made you no essay, Who thus implicitly can execute My bidding? What have I done, you could not? Who, knowing more than Anael the prostration Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life 130 Of this detested . . .

This Prefect? All 's in readiness?

Khalil.

The sword,

The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic tiar, Laid up so long, are all disposed beside The Prefect's chamber.

Djabal. — Why did you despair?
Khalil. I know our nation's state? Too surely

know,

As thou who speak'st to prove me! Wrongs like ours

Should wake revenge: but when I sought the wronged

And spoke, — "The Prefect stabbed your son — arise!

Your daughter, while you starve, eats shameless bread

In his pavilion — then arise!" — my speech
Fell idly: 't was, "Be silent, or worse fare!
Endure till time's slow eyele prove complete!
Who mayst thou be that takest on thee to thrust
Into this peril — art thou Hakeem?" No!
Only a mission like thy mission renders
All these obedient at a breath, subdues
Their private passions, brings their wills to one.

Djabal. You think so?

Khalil. Even now — when they have witnessed Thy miraeles — had I not threatened all 150 With Hakeem's vengeance, they would mar the work, And eouch ere this, each with his special prize, Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main hope To perish. No! When these have kissed thy feet At Lebanon, the past purged off, the present Clear, — for the future, even Hakeem's mission May end, and I perehance, or any youth, Shall rule them thus renewed. — I tutor thee!

Djabal. And wisely. (He is Anael's brother, pure As Anael's self.) Go say, I come to her.

Haste! I will follow you. [Khalil goes. Oh, not confess

To these, the blinded multitude — confess,
Before at least the fortune of my deed
Half-authorize its means! Only to her
Let me confess my fault, who in my path
Curled up like incense from a Mage-king's tomb
When he would have the wayfarer descend
Through the earth's rift and bear hid treasure forth!
How should child's-carelessness prove manhood's
crime

Till now that I, whose lone youth hurried past, 170 Letting each joy 'scape for the Druses' sake, At length recover in one Druse all joy? Were her brow brighter, her eyes richer, still Would I confess. On the gulf's verge I pause. How could I slay the Prefect, thus and thus? Anael, be mine to guard me, not destroy! [Goes.

Enter Anael, and Maani who is assisting to array her in the ancient dress of the Druses.

Anael. Those saffron vestures of the tabret-girls! Comes Djabal, think you?

Maani. Doubtless Djabal comes.

Anael. Dost thou snow-swathe thee kinglier, Lebanon,

Than in my dreams? — Nay, all the tresses off 180 My forehead! Look I lovely so? He says That I am lovely.

Maani. Lovely: nay, that hangs

Awry.

Anael. You tell me how a khandjar hangs?

The sharp side, thus, along the heart, see, marks

The maiden of our class. Arc you content

For Diabal as for me? Content, my child. Maani. . Content, my child.

Anael. Oh mother, tell me more of him! He comes

Even now — tell more, fill up my soul with him! Maani. And did I not . . . yes, surely . . . tell you all?

Anael. What will be changed in Djabal when the Change

the Change
Arrives? Which feature? Not his eyes!
'T is writ Maani. Our Hakeem's eyes rolled fire and clove the dark

Superbly.

Anael. Not his eyes! His voice perhaps? Yet that 's no change; for a grave current lived — Grandly beneath the surface ever lived, That, scattering, broke as in live silver spray While . . . ah, the bliss . . . he would discourse to me

In that enforced still fashion, word on word! 'T is the old current which must swell thro' that, For what least tone, Maani, could I lose? 200 'T is surely not his voice will change!

- If Hakeem

Only stood by! If Djabal, somehow, passed Out of the radiance as from out a robe; Possessed, but was not it!

He lived with you? Well — and that morning Djabal saw me first And heard me vow never to wed but one Who saved my People — on that day . . . proceed! Maani. Once more, then: from the time of his return

In secret, changed so since he left the Isle That I, who screened our Emir's last of sons,

210 .

This Diabal, from the Prefect's massacre

— Who bade him ne'er forget the child he was, — Who dreamed so long the youth he might be-

come ---

I knew not in the man that child; the man Who spoke alone of hope to save our tribe, How he had gone from land to land to save Our tribe — allies were sure, nor foes to dread. And much he mused, days, nights, alone he mused: But never till that day when, pale and worn As by a persevering woe, he cried 220 "Is there not one Druse left me?" — and I showed The way to Khalil's and your hiding-place From the abhorred eye of the Prefect here, So that he saw you, heard you speak — till then, Never did he announce — (how the moon seemed To ope and shut, the while, above us both!) - His mission was the mission promised us; The cycle had revolved; all things renewing, He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead His children home anon, now veiled to work Great purposes: the Druses now would change!

Anael. And they have changed! And obstacles

did sink.

And furtherances rose! And round his form Played fire, and music beat her angel wings! My people, let me more rejoice, oh more For you than for myself! Did I but watch Afar the pageant, feel our Khalif pass, One of the throng, how proud were I — tho' ne'er Singled by Djabal's glance! But to be chosen His own from all, the most his own of all, 240 To be exalted with him, side by side, Lead the exulting Druses, meet . . . ah, how Worthily meet the maidens who await

Ever beneath the cedars — how deserve This honor, in their eyes? So bright are they Who saffron-vested sound the tabret there, The girls who throng there in my dream! One hour And all is over: how shall I do aught That may deserve next hour's exalting? — How? — Suddenly to Maani.

Mother, I am not worthy him! I read it 250 Still in his eyes! He stands as if to tell me I am not, yet forbears. Why else revert To one theme ever? — how mere human gifts Suffice him in myself — whose worship fades, Whose awe goes ever off at his approach, As now, who when he comes . . .

[DJABAL enters.] Oh why is it

I cannot kneel to you?

Djabal. Rather, 't is I

Should kneel to you, my Anael!

Even so!

For never seem you — shall I speak the truth? — Never a God to me! 'T is the Man's hand, Eye, voice! Oh do you veil these to our people, Or but to me? To them, I think, to them! And brightness is their veil, shadow — my truth! You mean that I should never kneel to you — So, thus I kneel!

Djabal [preventing her.] No — no!

Feeling the khandjar as he raises her.

Ha, have you chosen . . .

Anael. The khandjar with our ancient garb. But, Djabal,

Change not, be not exalted yet! Give time That I may plan more, perfect more! My blood Beats, beats!

[Aside.] Oh must I then — since Loys leaves us

Never to come again, renew in me 270 These doubts so near effaced already — must I needs confess them now to Djabal? — own That when I saw that stranger, heard his voice, My faith fell, and the woful thought flashed first That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken For proof of more than human attributes In him, by me whose heart at his approach Beat fast, whose brain while he was by swam round, Whose soul at his departure died away, — That every such effect might have been wrought In other frames, tho' not in mine, by Loys Or any merely mortal presence? Doubt Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now? How shall I meet the rapture presently, With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed?

Djabal [aside]. Avow the truth? I cannot! In what words

Avow that all she loved in me was false? — Which yet has served that flower-like love of hers To climb by, like the clinging gourd, and clasp With its divinest wealth of leaf and bloom. 290 Could I take down the prop-work, in itself So vile, yet interlaced and overlaid With painted cups and fruitage — might these still Bask in the sun, unconscious their own strength Of matted stalk and tendril had replaced The old support thus silently withdrawn! But no; the beauteous fabric crushes too. 'T is not for my sake but for Anael's sake I leave her soul this Hakeem where it leans. Oh could I vanish from her, quit the Isle! 300 And yet — a thought comes: here my work is done At every point; the Druses must return Have convoy to their birth-place back, whoe'er

The leader be, myself or any Druse — Venice is pledged to that: 't is for myself, For my own vengeance in the Prefect's death, I stay now, not for them: to slay or spare The Prefect, whom imports it save myself? He cannot bar their passage from the Isle; What would his death be but my own reward? 310 Then, mine I will forego. It is foregone! Let him escape with all my House's blood! Ere he can reach land, Djabal disappears, And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall, fresh as first, Live in her memory, keeping her sublime Above the world. She cannot touch that world By ever knowing what I truly am, Since Loys, — of mankind the only one Able to link my present with my past, My life in Europe with my Island life, 320 Thence, able to unmask me, — I've disposed Safely at last at Rhodes, and . . .

Enter Khalil.

Khalil. Loys greets thee! Djabal. Loys? To drag me back? It cannot be!
Anael [aside]. Loys! Ah, doubt may not be stifled so!

Khalil. Can I have erred that thou so gazest? Yes, I told thee not in the glad press of tidings Of higher import, Loys is returned Before the Prefect, with, if possible, Twice the light-heartedness of old. As though On some inauguration he expects, 330 To-day, the world's fate hung!

Djabal. — And asks for me? Khalil. Thou knowest all things. Thee in chief

he greets,

But every Druse of us is to be happy At his arrival, he declares: were Loys Thou, Master, he could have no wider soul To take us in with. How I love that Loys!

Djabal [aside]. Shame winds me with her tether

round and round.

Anael [aside]. Loys? I take the trial! it is meet, The little I can do, be done; that faith,

All I can offer, want no perfecting
Which my own act may compass. Ay, this way

All may go well, nor that ignoble doubt

Be chased by other aid than mine. Advance Close to my fear, weigh Loys with my Lord,

The mortal with the more than mortal gifts!

Djabal [aside]. Before, there were so few deceived! and now

There's doubtless not one least Druse in the Isle

But, having learned my superhuman claims,

And calling me his Khalif-God, will clash

The whole truth out from Loys at first word! 350

While Loys, for his part, will hold me up,

With a Frank's unimaginable scorn

Of such imposture, to my people's eyes!

Could I but keep him longer yet awhile

From them, amuse him here until I plan

How he and I at once may leave the Isle!

Khalil I cannot part with from my side —

My only help in this emergency:

There's Anael!

Anael. Please you?

Djabal. Anael — none but she!

[To Anael.] I pass some minutes in the chamber there.

Ere I see Loys: you shall speak with him

Until I join you. Khalil follows me.

Anael [aside]. As I divined: he bids me save my-self,

Offers me a probation — I accept.

Let me see Loys!

Loys [without]. Djabal!

Anael [aside]. 'T is his voice.

The smooth Frank trifler with our people's wrongs,
The self-complacent boy-inquirer, loud

On this and that inflicted tyranny,

— Aught serving to parade an ignorance
Of how wrong feels, inflicted! Let me close
With what I viewed at distance: let myself
Probe this delusion to the core!

Djabal. He comes.

Khalil, along with me! while Anael waits
Till I return once more—and but once more.

ACT III

Anael and Loys.

Anael. Here leave me! Here I wait another. 'T was

For no mad protestation of a love

Like this you say possesses you, I came.

Loys. Love? how protest a love I dare not feel? Mad words may doubtless have escaped me: you Are here — I only feel you here!

Anael. No more!

Loys. But once again, whom could you love? I dare,

Alas, say nothing of myself, who am A Knight now, for when Knighthood we embrace, Love we abjure: so, speak on safely: speak, 10 Lest I speak, and betray my faith! And yet

To say your breathing passes through me, changes My blood to spirit, and my spirit to you, As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it — This is not to protest my love! You said You could love one . . .

Anael. One only! We are bent To earth — who raises up my tribe, I love; The Prefect bows us — who removes him; we Have ancient rights — who gives them back to us, I love. Forbear me! Let my hand go!

Loys. Him 20 You could love only? Where is Djabal? Stay! [Aside.] Yet wherefore stay? Who does this but

myself?

Had I apprised her that I come to do
Just this, what more could she acknowledge? No,
She sees into my heart's core! What is it
Feeds either cheek with red, as June some rose?
Why turns she from me? Ah fool, over-fond
To dream I could call up . . .

Yet feigned! 'T is love! Oh Anael, speak to me! Djabal—

Anael. Seek Djabal by the Prefect's chamber 30 At noon! [She paces the room.

Loys [aside]. And am I not the Prefect now?

Is it my fate to be the only one
Able to win her love, the only one
Unable to accept her love? The past
Breaks up beneath my footing: came I here
This morn as to a slave, to set her free
And take her thanks, and then spend day by day
Content beside her in the Isle? What works
This knowledge in me now? Her eye has broken
The faint disguise away: for Anael's sake

I left the Isle, for her espoused the cause Of the Druses, all for her I thought, till now, To live without!

— As I must live! To-day Ordains me Knight, forbids me . . . never shall Forbid me to profess myself, heart, arm, Thy soldier!

Diabal you demanded, comes. Angel.

Loys [aside]. What wouldst thou, Loys? See him? Naught beside

Is wanting: I have felt his voice a spell

From first to last. He brought me here, made known

The Druses to me, drove me hence to seek 50 Redress for them; and shall I meet him now, When naught is wanting but a word of his, To — what? — induce me to spurn hope, faith, pride.

Honor away, — to cast my lot among His tribe, become a proverb in men's mouths, Breaking my high pact of companionship With those who graciously bestowed on me The very opportunities I turn

Against them! Let me not see Djabal now! Anael. The Prefect also comes.

Loys [aside]. Him let me see. Not Djabal! Him, degraded at a word, To soothe me, — to attest belief in me-And after, Djabal! Yes, ere I return

To her, the Nuncio's vow shall have destroyed This heart's rebellion, and coerced this will Forever.

Anael, not before the vows Irrevocably fix me . .

Let me fly!

59

70

80

The Prefect, or I lose myself forever! [Goes. Anael. Yes, I am calm now; just one way remains—

One, to attest my faith in him: for, see, I were quite lost else: Loys, Djabal, stand On either side — two men! I balance looks And words, give Djabal a man's preference, No more. In Djabal, Hakeem is absorbed! And for a love like this, the God who saves My race, selects me for his bride? One way!

Enter DJABAL.

Djabal [to himself]. No moment is to waste then; 't is resolved.

If Khalil may be trusted to lead back My Druses, and if Loys can be lured Out of the Isle — if I procure his silence, Or promise never to return at least, — All's over. Even now my bark awaits: I reach the next wild islet and the next, And lose myself beneath the sun forever. And now, to Anael!

Anael. Djabal, I am thine!

Djabal. Mine? Djabal's? — As if Hakeem had not been?

Anael. Not Djabal's? Say first, do you read my thought?

Why need I speak, if you can read my thought?

Djabal. I do not, I have said a thousand times.

Anael. (My secret's safe, I shall surprise him yet!)

Djabal, I knew your secret from the first:
Djabal, when first I saw you . . . (by our porch
You leant, and pressed the tinkling veil away,

And one fringe fell behind your neck — I see!) . . . I knew you were not human, for I said "This dim secluded house where the sea beats Is heaven to me — my people's huts are hell To them; this august form will follow me, Mix with the waves his voice will, — I have him; And they, the Prefect! Oh, my happiness 100 Rounds to the full whether I choose or no! His eyes met mine, he was about to speak, His hand grew damp — surely he meant to say He let me love him: in that moment's bliss I shall forget my people pine for home — They pass and they repass with pallid eyes!" I vowed at once a certain vow; this vow Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved. Embrace me!

Djabal [apart]. And she loved me! Naught

remained

But that! Nay, Anael, is the Prefect dead? 110

Anael. Ah, you reproach me! True, his death crowns all,

I know — or should know: and I would do much, Believe! but, death! Oh, you, who have known death.

Would never doom the Prefect, were death fearful

As we report!

Death! — a fire curls within us From the foot's palm, and fills up to the brain, Up, out, then shatters the whole bubble-shell Of flesh, perchance!

Death! — witness, I would die,
Whate'er death be, would venture now to die
For Khalil, for Maani — what for thee?
Nay, but embrace me, Djabal, in assurance
My vow will not be broken, for I must

Do something to attest my faith in you,

Be worthy you!

Djabal [avoiding her]. I come for that — to say

Such an occasion is at hand: 't is like

I leave you — that we part, my Anael, — part

Forever!

Anael. We part? Just so! I have succumbed,—I am, he thinks, unworthy—and naught less

Will serve than such approval of my faith.

Then, we part not! Remains there no way short 130

Of that? Oh not that!

Death! — yet a hurt bird

Died in my hands; its eyes filmed — "Nay, it sleeps,"

I said, "'t will wake to-morrow well:" 't was dead.

Djabal. I stand here and time fleets. Anael—I come

To bid a last farewell to you: perhaps

We never meet again. But, ere the Prefect

Arrive . . .

Enter Khalil, breathlessly.

Khalil. He's here! The Prefect! Twenty guards,

No more: no sign he dreams of danger. All

Awaits thee only. Ayoob, Karshook, keep
Their posts — wait but the deed's accomplishment
To join us with thy Druses to a man.

Still holds his course the Nuncio — near and near

The fleet from Candia steering.

Djabal [aside]. All is lost!

— Or won?

Khalil. And I have laid the sacred robe, The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch — the place

Commanded. Thou wilt hear the Prefect's trumpet.

Diabal. Then I keep Anael, — him then, past recall. I slav — 't is forced on me. As I began I must conclude — so be it! Khalil. For the rest. Save Loys, our foe's solitary sword, 150 All is so safe that . . . I will ne'er entreat Thy post again of thee: tho' danger none, There must be glory only meet for thee In slaving the Prefect. Anael [aside]. And 't is now that Djabal Would leave me! — in the glory meet for him! Djabal. As glory, I would yield the deed to you Or any Druse; what peril there may be,

I keep. [Aside.] All things conspire to hound me on. Not now, my soul, draw back, at least! Not now! The course is plain, howe'er obscure all else. Once offer this tremendous sacrifice, Prevent what else will be irreparable, Secure these transcendental helps, regain The Cedars — then let all dark clear itself! I slay him!

Khalil. Anael, and no part for us!

[To DJABAL.] Hast thou possessed her with. Djabal [to Anael]. Whom speak you to? What is it you behold there? Nay, this smile Turns stranger. Shudder you? The man must die. As thousands of our race have died thro' him. One blow, and I discharge his weary soul 170 From the flesh that pollutes it! Let him fill Straight some new expiatory form, of earth Or sea, the reptile or some aery thing: What is there in his death? Anael.

My brother said,

Is there no part in it for us?

Diabal. For Khalil. — The trumpet will announce the Nuncio's entry; Here, I shall find the Prefect hastening In the Pavilion to receive him — here I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayoob leads The Nuncio with his guards within: once these 180 Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayoob bar Entry or egress till I give the sign Which waits the landing of the argosies You will announce to me: this double sign That justice is performed and help arrived, When Ayoob shall receive, but not before, Let him throw ope the palace doors, admit The Druses to behold their tyrant, ere We leave forever this detested spot. Go, Khalil, hurry all! No pause, no pause! 190 Whirl on the dream, secure to wake anon! *Khalil.* What sign? and who the bearer? Djabal. Who shall show My ring, admit to Ayoob. How she stands! Have I not . . . I must have some task for her. Anael, not that way! 'T is the Prefect's chamber!
Anael, keep you the ring — give you the sign! (It holds her safe amid the stir.) You will Be faithful?

Anael [taking the ring]. I would fain be worthy.

Hark! [Trumpet without.

Khalil. He comes.

Djabal. And I too come.

Anael. One word, but one! Say, shall you be exalted at the deed? 200

Then? On the instant?

Djabal. I exalted? What?

He, there — we, thus — our wrongs revenged, our tribe

Oh, then shall I, assure yourself, Set free? shall each of us, be in his death Shall you, Exalted!

Khalil. He is here.

Away — away! [They go. Djabal

Enter the Prefect with Guards, and Loys.

The Prefect [to Guards]. Back, I say, to the galley

every guard!

That 's my sole care now; see each bench retains Its complement of rowers; I embark O' the instant, since this Knight will have it so. Alas me! Could you have the heart, my Loys! 210 [To a Guard who whispers.] Oh, bring the holy Nuncio here forthwith! [The Guards go.

Loys, a rueful sight, confess, to see The gray discarded Prefect leave his post, With tears i' the eye! So, you are Prefect now? You depose me — you succeed me? Ha, ha!

Loys. And dare you laugh, whom laughter less

becomes

Than yesterday's forced meekness we beheld . . . Prefect. — When you so eloquently pleaded, Loys, For my dismissal from the post? Ah, meek With cause enough, consult the Nuncio else! 220 And wish him the like meekness: for so stanch A servant of the Church can scarce have bought His share in the Isle, and paid for it, hard pieces!

I shall be safe by then i' the galley, Loys! Loys. You make as you would tell me you rejoice

You've my successor to condole with, Nuncio!

To leave your scene of.

Trade in the dear Druses? Prefect. Blood and sweat traffic? Spare what yesterday

We heard enough of! Drove I in the Isle A profitable game? Learn wit, my son, 230 Which you 'll need shortly! Did it never breed Suspición in you, all was not pure profit, When I, the insatiate . . . and so forth — was bent On having a partaker in my rule? Why did I yield this Nuncio half the gain, If not that I might also shift — what on him? Half of the peril, Loys!

Lous. Peril?

Prefect. Hark you! I'd love you if you'd let me — this for reason, You save my life at price of . . . well, say risk At least, of yours. I came a long time since To the Isle; our Hospitallers bade me tame These savage wizards, and reward myself —

Loys. The Knights who so repudiate your crime? Prefect. Loys, the Knights! we doubtless under-

stood

Each other; as for trusting to reward From any friend beside myself . . . no, no! I clutched mine on the spot, when it was sweet, And I had taste for it. I felt these wizards Alive — was sure they were not on me, only When I was on them: but with age comes caution: And stinging pleasures please less and sting more. Year by year, fear by fear! The girls were brighter Than ever ('faith, there 's yet one Anael left, I set my heart upon — Oh, prithee, let That brave new sword lie still!) — These joys looked brighter,

But silenter the town, too, as I passed. With this alcove's delicious memories Began to mingle visions of gaunt fathers, Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the mine, the oar, Stealing to catch me. Brief, when I began
To quake with fear — (I think I hear the Chapter
Solicited to let me leave, now all
Worth staying for was gained and gone!) — I say,
Just when, for the remainder of my life,
All methods of escape seemed lost — that then
Up should a young hot-headed Loys spring,
Talk very long and loud, — in fine, compel
The Knights to break their whole arrangement,
have me

Home for pure shame — from this safehold of mine Where but ten thousand Druses seek my life, 270 To my wild place of banishment, San Gines By Murcia, where my three fat manors lying, Purchased by gains here and the Nuncio's gold, Are all I have to guard me, — that such fortune Should fall to me, I hardly could expect. Therefore I say, I'd love you.

Loys. Can it be?
I play into your hands then? Oh no, no!
The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order
Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pit?

But I will back — will yet unveil you!

Prefect. Me? 280

To whom? — perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chapter Shook his white head thrice—and some dozen times My hand next morning shook, for value paid!

To that Italian saint, Sir Cosimo? — Indignant at my wringing year by year A thousand bezants from the coral-divers, As you recounted; felt the saint aggrieved?

Well might he — I allowed for his half-share

Loys. See! you dare Inculpate the whole Order; yet should I,

Merely one hundred. To Sir.

A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change Their evil way, had they been firm in it? Answer me!

Prefect. Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,
And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,
And the young arm, we'll even say, my Loys,
— The fear of losing or diverting these
Into another channel, by gainsaying
A novice too abruptly, could not influence

The Order! You might join, for aught they cared, Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well, 300

I thank you for my part, at all events.

Stay here till they withdraw you! You 'll inhabit

My palace — sleep, perchance, in the alcove

Whither I go to meet our holy friend.

Good! and now disbelieve me if you can, — This is the first time for long years I enter

Thus [lifts the arras] without feeling just as if I lifted

The lid up of my tomb.

Loys. They share his crime!

God's punishment will overtake you yet.

Prefect. Thank you it does not! Pardon this last

I bear a sober visage presently

With the disinterested Nuncio here—

His purchase-money safe at Murcia, too!

Let me repeat — for the first time, no draught

Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.

When we next meet, this folly may have passed, We'll hope. Ha, ha! [Goes through the arras.

Loys. Assure me but . . . he 's gone! He could not lie. Then what have I escaped,

I, who had so nigh given up happiness

Forever, to be linked with him and them!

320

Oh, opportunest of discoveries! I
Their Knight? I utterly renounce them all!
Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio? Yes,
The same hyæna groan-like laughter! Quick—
To Djabal! I am one of them at last,
These simple-hearted Druses—Anael's tribe!
Djabal! She 's mine at last. Djabal, I say! [Goes.

ACT IV

Enter DJABAL.

Djabal. Let me but slay the Prefect. The end now!

To-morrow will be time enough to pry
Into the means I took: suffice, they served,
Ignoble as they were, to hurl revenge
True to its object. [Seeing the robe, etc., disposed.

Mine should never so

Have hurried to accomplishment! Thee, Djabal, Far other mood befitted! Calm the Robe Should clothe this doom's awarder!

[Taking the robe.] Shall I dare
Assume my nation's Robe? I am at least
A Druse again, chill Europe's policy
Drops from me: I dare take the Robe. Why not
The Tiar? I rule the Druses, and what more
Betokens it than rule? — yet — yet —

[Footsteps in the alcove.] [Lays down the tiar.]

He comes!

[Taking the sword.]

If the Sword serve, let the Tiar lie! So, feet Clogged with the blood of twenty years can fall Thus lightly! Round me, all ye ghosts! He'll lift.

Which arm to push the arras wide? — or both? Stab from the neck down to the heart — there stay! Near he comes—nearer—the next footstep! Now!

As he dashes aside the arras, Anael is discovered.

Ha! Anael! Nay, my Anael, can it be? Heard you the trumpet? I must slay him here, And here you ruin all. Why speak you not?

Anael, the Prefect comes! [Anael screams.

So slow to feel

'T is not a sight for you to look upon?

A moment's work — but such work! Till you go, I must be idle — idle, I risk all!

[Pointing to her hair.

Those locks are well, and you are beauteous thus, But with the dagger 't is, I have to do!

Anael. With mine!

Blood — Anael? Djabal.

Djabal, 't is thy deed! Angel. It must be! I had hoped to claim it mine — Be worthy thee — but I must needs confess

'T was not I, but thyself . . . not I have . . . Djabal!

Speak to me!

Djabal. Oh, my punishment!

Anael. Speak to me While I can speak! touch me, despite the blood! When the command passed from thy soul to mine, I went, fire leading me, muttering of thee, And the approaching exaltation, — "make One sacrifice!" I said, — and he sat there, Bade me approach; and, as I did approach, Thy fire with music burst into my brain. 'T was but a moment's work, thou saidst —

perchance It may have been so! Well, it is thy deed. Djabal. It is my deed.

Anael. His blood all this! — this! and . . . And more! Sustain me, Djabal! Wait not — now Let flash thy glory! Change thyself and me! It must be! Ere the Druses flock to us! At least confirm me! Djabal, blood gushed forth— He was our tyrant — but I looked he 'd fall Prone as asleep — why else is death called sleep? Sleep? He bent o'er his breast! 'T is sin, I know, — Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let him? Be it thou that punishest, not he — who creeps On his red breast — is here! 'T is the small groan Of a child — no worse! Bestow the new life, then! Too swift it cannot be, too strange, surpassing!

[Following him as he retreats.

Now! Change us both! Change me and change thou!

Djabal [sinks on his knees]. Thus! Behold my change! You have done nobly. I!—

Anael. Can Hakeem kneel?

No Hakeem, and scarce Djabal! Diabal. I have dealt falsely, and this woe is come. 59 No — hear me ere scorn blast me! Once and ever, The deed is mine. Oh think upon the past!

Anael [to herself]. Did I strike once, or twice, or

many times?

Djabal. I came to lead my tribe where, bathed in glooms,

Doth Bahumid the Renovator sleep: Anael, I saw my tribe: I said, "Without A miracle this cannot be"—I said "Be there a miracle!" — for I saw you.

Anael. His head lies south the portal.

Djabal. — Weighed with this The general good, how could I choose my own?

What matter was my purity of soul? 70 Little by little I engaged myself — Heaven would accept me for its instrument. I hoped: I said Heaven had accepted me. Anael. Is it this blood breeds dreams in me? Who said You were not Hakeem? And your miracles — The fire that plays innocuous round your form? [Again changing her whole manner. Ah, thou wouldst try me — thou art Hakeem still! Diabal. Woe — woe! As if the Druses of the Mount. (Scarce Arabs, even there, but here, in the Isle, Beneath their former selves) should comprehend 80 The subtle lore of Europe! A few secrets That would not easily affect the meanest Of the crowd there, could wholly subjugate The best of our poor tribe. Again that eye? Anael [after a pause springs to his neck]. Djabal, in this there can be no deceit! Why, Djabal, were you human only, — think, Maani is but human, Khalil human, Lovs is human even — did their words Haunt me, their looks pursue me? Shame on you So to have tried me! Rather, shame on me 90 So to need trying! Could I, with the Prefect And the blood, there — could I see only you? - Hang by your neck over this gulf of blood? Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal! Am I saved? [As DJABAL slowly unclasps her arms, and puts her

Hakeem would save me. Thou art Djabal. Crouch!
Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!
The pile of thee, I reared up to the cloud—
Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,

silently from him.

Based on the living rock, devoured not by
The unstable desert's jaws of sand, — falls prone.
Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there
A ruin, obscene creatures will moan through.

— Let us come, Djabal!

Djabal. Whither come?
Anael. At once—

Lest so it grow intolerable. Come!
Will I not share it with thee? Best at once!
So, feel less pain! Let them deride, — thy tribe
Now trusting in thee, — Loys shall deride!
Come to them, hand in hand, with me!

Djabal. Where come?

Anael. Where? — to the Druses thou hast wronged! Confess,

Now that the end is gained — (I love thee now —)
That thou hast so deceived them — (perchance love thee

Better than ever.) Come, receive their doom Of infamy! O, best of all I love thee! Shame with the man, no triumph with the God, Be mine! Come!

Djabal. Never! More shame yet? and why? Why? You have called this deed mine—it is mine! And with it I accept its circumstance.

How can I longer strive with fate? The past Is past: my false life shall henceforth show true. Hear me! The argosies touch land by this;

They bear us to fresh scenes and happier skies.
What if we reign together?—if we keep

What if we reign together? — if we keep
Our secret for the Druses' good? — by means
Of even their superstition, plant in them
New life? I learn from Europe: all who seek
Man's good must awe man, by such means as these.

We two will be divine to them — we are!

All great works in this world spring from the ruins Of greater projects — ever, on our earth, Babels men block out, Babylons they build.

I wrest the weapon from your hand! I claim The deed! Retire! You have my ring — you bar All access to the Nuncio till the forces From Venice land.

Anael. Thou wilt feign Hakeem then? Djabal [putting the Tiara of Hakeem on his head].

And from this moment that I dare ope wide Eyes that till now refused to see, begins My true dominion: for I know myself, And what am I to personate. No word?

[Anael goes.

'T is come on me at last! His blood on her—
What memories will follow that! Her eye,
Her fierce distorted lip and ploughed black brow!
Ah, fool! Has Europe then so poorly tamed
The Syrian blood from out thee? Thou, presume
To work in this foul earth by means not foul?
Scheme, as for heaven,—but, on the earth, be glad
If a least ray like heaven's be left thee!

Thus

I shall be calm — in readiness — no way Surprised.

[A noise without.

This should be Khalil and my Druses.

Venice is come then! Thus I grasp thee, sword!

Druses, 't is Hakeem saves you! In! Behold

Your Prefect!

Enter Loys. DJABAL hides the khandjar in his robe.

Loys. Oh, well found, Djabal! — but no time for words.

You know who waits there? [Pointing to the alcove.

Well! — and that 't is there He meets the Nuncio? Well? Now, a surprise He there—

Djabal. I know —

—— is now no mortal's lord. Loys. Is absolutely powerless — call him, dead — He is no longer Prefect — you are Prefect! Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the dark, Nothing unworthy Breton blood, believe! I understood at once your urgency 160 That I should leave this isle for Rhodes; I felt What you were loth to speak — your need of help. I have fulfilled the task that earnestness Imposed on me: have, face to face, confronted The Prefect in full Chapter, charged on him The enormities of his long rule; he stood Mute, offered no defence, no crime denied. On which, I spoke of you, and of your tribe, Your faith so like our own, and all you urged Of old to me: I spoke, too, of your goodness, Your patience — brief, I hold henceforth the Isle In charge, am nominally lord, — but you, You are associated in my rule -Are the true Prefect! Ay, such faith had they In my assurance of your loyalty (For who insults an imbecile old man?) That we assume the Prefecture this hour. You gaze at me? Hear greater wonders yet — I cast down all the fabric I have built. These Knights, I was prepared to worship . . . but Of that another time; what 's now to say, Is — I shall never be a Knight! Oh, Djabal, Here first I throw all prejudice aside, And call you brother! I am Druse like you: My wealth, my friends, my powers, are wholly yours,

Your people's, which is now my people: for There is a maiden of your tribe, I love — She loves me — Khalil's sister — Djabal. Anael? Loys. Start you? Seems what I say, unknightly? Thus it chanced: When first I came, a novice, to the isle . . . Enter one of the Nuncio's Guards from the alcove. Guard. Oh horrible! Sir Loys! Here is Loys! And here — [Others enter from the alcove. [Pointing to DJABAL]. Secure him, bind him — this And here — [They surround DJABAL. is he! Loys. Madmen — what is 't you do? Stand from my friend, And tell me! Thou canst have no part in this — Guard. Surely no part! But slay him not! The Nuncio Commanded, slay him not! Speak, or . . . Lous. The Prefect Guard. Lies murdered there by him thou dost embrace. By Djabal? Miserable fools! How Lous. Diabal? [A Guard lifts DJABAL's robe; DJABAL flings down the khandjar. Loys [after a pause]. Thou hast received some insult worse than all, 199 Some outrage not to be endured — [To the Guards.] Stand back! He is my friend - more than my friend. Thou hast Slain him upon that provocation. No! Guard. No provocation! 'T is a long devised

Conspiracy: the whole tribe is involved.

He is their Khalif — 't is on that pretence — Their mighty Khalif who died long ago, And now comes back to life and light again! All is just now revealed, I know not how, By one of his confederates — who, struck With horror at this murder, first apprised 210 The Nuncio. As 't was said, we find this Djabal Here where we take him.

Djabal [aside]. Who broke faith with me? Loys [to Djabal]. Hear'st thou? Speak! Till

thou speak, I keep off these,

Or die with thee. Deny this story! Thou A Khalif, an impostor? Thou, my friend, Whose tale was of an inoffensive tribe, With . . . but thou know'st — on that tale's truth

I pledged

My faith before the Chapter: what art thou?

Djabal. Loys, I am as thou hast heard. All 's

true.

No more concealment! As these tell thee, all Was long since planned. Our Druses are enough To crush this handful: the Venetians land Even now in our behalf. Loys, we part. Thou, serving much, wouldst fain have served me more;

It might not be. I thank thee. As thou hearest, We are a separated tribe: farewell!

Loys. Oh where will truth be found now? Canst

Belie the Druses? Do they share thy crime?
Those thou professest of our Breton stock,
Are partners with thee? Why, I saw but now
Khalil, my friend: he spoke with me — no word
Of this! and Anael — whom I love, and who
Loves me — she spoke no word of this.

Djabal. Poor boy! Anael, who loves thee? Khalil, fast thy friend? We, offsets from a wandering Count of Dreux? No: older than the oldest, princelier Than Europe's princeliest race, our tribe: enough For thine, that on our simple faith we found A monarchy to shame your monarchies At their own trick and secret of success. 240 The child of this our tribe shall laugh upon The palace-step of him whose life ere night Is forfeit, as that child shall know, and yet Shall laugh there! What, we Druses wait forsooth The kind interposition of a boy — Can only save ourselves if thou concede: - Khalil admire thee? He is my right-hand, My delegate! — Anael accept thy love? She is my bride! Thy bride? She one of them? 249 Lous.

Djabal. My bride!

And she retains her glorious eyes! Loys. She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's guilt!

Ah — who but she directed me to find Diabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil Bade me seek Djabal there, too. All is truth. What spoke the Prefect worse of them than this? Did the Church ill to institute long since Perpetual warfare with such serpentry? And I — have I desired to shift my part, Evade my share in her design? 'T is well.

Djabal. Loys, I wronged thee — but unwittingly: I never thought there was in thee a virtue That could attach itself to what thou deemest A race below thine own. I wronged thee, Loys, But that is over: all is over now,

Save the protection I ensure against
My people's anger. By their Khalif's side,
Thou art secure and mayst depart: so, come!
Loys. Thy side? I take protection at thy hand?

Enter other Guards.

Guards. Fly with him! Fly, Sir Loys! 'T is too true:

And only by his side thou mayst escape.

The whole tribe is in full revolt: they flock
About the palace — will be here — on thee —
And there are twenty of us, we the Guards
O' the Nuncio, to withstand them! Even we
Had stayed to meet our death in ignorance,
But that one Druse, a single faithful Druse,
Made known the horror to the Nuncio. Fly!
The Nuncio stands aghast. As least let us
Escape thy wrath, O Hakeem! We are naught
In thy tribe's persecution! [To Loys.] Keep by
him!

They hail him Hakeem, their dead Prince returned: He is their God, they shout, and at his beck

Are life and death!

Loys [springing at the khandjar Djabal had thrown down, seizes him by the throat]. Thus by his side am I!

Thus I resume my knighthood and its warfare,
Thus end thee, miscreant, in thy pride of place!
Thus art thou caught. Without, thy dupes may
cluster:

Friends aid thee, foes avoid thee, —thou art Hakeem, How say they? — God art thou! but also here Is the least, youngest, meanest the Church calls Her servant, and his single arm avails

To aid her as she lists. I rise, and thou Art crushed. Hordes of thy Druses flock without: Here thou hast me, who represent the Cross, Honor and Faith, 'gainst Hell, Mahound and thee. Die! [DJABAL remains calm.] Implore my mercy, Hakeem, that my scorn

May help me! Nay, I cannot ply thy trade;
I am no Druse, no stabber: and thine eye,
Thy form, are too much as they were — my friend
Had such. Speak! Beg for mercy at my foot! 29

[DJABAL still silent.

Heaven could not ask so much of me — not, sure,

So much. I cannot kill him so.

[After a pause.] Thou art
Strong in thy cause, then — dost outbrave us, then.
Heardst thou that one of thine accomplices,
Thy very people, has accused thee? Meet
His charge! Thou hast not even slain the Prefect
As thy own vile creed warrants. Meet that Druse!
Come with me and disprove him — be thou tried
By him, nor seek appeal! Promise me this,
Or I will do God's office. What, shalt thou
Boast of assassins at thy beck, yet truth
Want even an executioner? Consent,
Or I will strike — look in my face — I will!

Djabal. Give me again my khandjar, if thou darest! Loys gives it.

Let but one Druse accuse me, and I plunge
This home. A Druse betray me? Let us go!
[Aside.] Who has betrayed me? [Shouts without.
Hearest thou? I hear

No plainer than long years ago I heard
That shout — but in no dream now. They return!
Wilt thou be leader with me, Loys? Well.

ACT V

The Uninitiated Druses, filling the hall tumultuously, and speaking together.

Here flock we, obeying the summons. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon! My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there. Come, old Nasif — link thine arm in mine — we fight, if needs be. Come, what is a great fight-word? — "Lebanon"? (My daughter — my daughter!) — But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza? — Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves. Where is Hakeem? — The only prophet 10 I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once, in my youth: a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent. Is this he? Biamrallah! Biamreh! HAKEEM!

Enter the Nuncio, with Guards.

Nuncio [to his Attendants]. Hold both, the sorcerer and this accomplice
Ye talk of, that accuseth him! And tell
Sir Loys he is mine, the Church's hope:
Bid him approve himself our Knight indeed!
Lo, this black disemboguing of the Isle!

[To the Druses.] Ah children, what a sight for these old eyes

That kept themselves alive this voyage through To smile their very last on you! I came To gather one and all you wandering sheep Into my fold, as though a father came . . .

50

As though, in coming, a father should . . [To his Guards.] (Ten, twelve — Twelve guards of you, and not an outlet? None? The wizards stop each avenue? Keep close!) [To the Druses.] As if one came to a son's house, I say, So did I come — no guard with me — to find . . . Alas — alas! A Druse. Who is the old man? Another. Oh, ye are to shout! Children, he styles you. Druses. Av, the Prefect's slain! Glory to the Khalif, our Father! Nuncio. Even so I find, (ye prompt aright) your father slain. While most he plotted for your good, that father (Alas, how kind, ye never knew) — lies slain. [Aside.] (And hell's worm gnaw the glozing knave - with me, For being duped by his cajoleries! Are these the Christians? These the docile crew My bezants went to make me Bishop o'er?) [To his Attendants, who whisper.] What say ye does this wizard style himself? Hakeem? Biamrallah? The third Fatemite? What is this jargon? He — the insane Khalif, Dead near three hundred years ago, come back In flesh and blood again? Druses. He mutters! Hear ve? He is blaspheming Hakeem. The old man Is our dead Prefect's friend. Tear him! Nuncio. Ye dare not.

I stand here with my five-and-seventy years, The Patriarch's power behind me, God's above. Those years have witnessed sin enough; ere now

Misguided men arose against their lords, And found excuse; but ye, to be enslaved By sorceries, cheats — alas! the same tricks, tried On my poor children in this nook o' the earth, Could triumph, that have been successively Exploded, laughed to scorn, all nations through: "Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi, Cretes and Arabians" — you are duped the last. Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye Tear me! Shall I return to tell the Patriarch 60 That so much love was wasted — every gift Rejected, from his benison I brought, Down to the galley-full of bezants, sunk An hour since at the harbor's mouth, by that . . . That . . . never will I speak his hated name! [To his Servants.] What was the name his fellow slip-fetter Called their arch-wizard by? [They whisper.] Oh, Djabal was 't? *Druses.* But how a sorcerer? false wherein? Nuncio. (Ay, Djabal!) How false? Ye know not, Djabal has confessed . . . Nay, that by tokens found on him we learn 70 What I sailed hither solely to divulge — How by his spells the demons were allured To seize you: not that these be aught save lies And mere illusions. Is this clear? I say, By measures such as these, he would have led you Into a monstrous ruin: follow ye? Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my sons? Druses. Hark ve!

Nuncio. — Be of one privilege amerced?
No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies are!
No! With the Patriarch's license, still I bid

80

Tcar him to picces who misled you! Haste!

Druses. The old man's beard shakes, and his eyes are white fire! After all, I know nothing of Djabal beyond what Karshook says; he knows but what Khalil says, who knows just what Djabal says himself. Now, the little Copht Prophet, I saw at Cairo in my youth, began by promising each bystander three full measures of wheat . . .

Enter Khalil and the initiated Druses.

Khalil. Venice and her deliverance are at hand:
Their fleet stands through the harbor. Hath he slain
The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change come yet? 91
Nuncio [to Attendants]. What 's this of Venice?

Who's this boy?

[Attendants whisper.] One Khalil?

Djabal's accomplice, Loys called, but now, The only Druse, save Djabal's self, to fear?

[To the Druses.] I cannot hear ye with these aged

Is it so? Ye would have my troops assist?

Doth he abet him in his sorceries?

Down with the cheat, guards, as my children bid!

[They spring at Khalil; as he beats them back, Stay! No more bloodshed! Spare deluded youth! Whom seek'st thou? (I will teach him) — whom,

seek'st thou? (I will teach nim) — whom my child?

Thou know'st not what these know, what these declare.

I am an old man as thou seest — have done With life; and what should move me but the truth?

Art thou the only fond one of thy tribe?

'T is I interpret for thy tribe.

Khalil. Oh, this

Is the expected Nuncio! Druses, hear —

Endure ye this? Unworthy to partake The glory Hakeem gains you! While I speak, The ships touch land: who makes for Lebanon? They plant the winged lion in these halls! 110 Nuncio [aside]. If it be true! Venice? Oh. never truc!

Yet Venice would so gladly thwart our Knights, So fain get footing here, stand close by Rhodes! Oh, to be duped this way!

Khalil. Ere he appear

And lead you gloriously, repent, I say!

Nuncio [aside]. Nor any way to stretch the archwizard stark

Ere the Venetians come? Cut off the head.

The trunk were easily stilled. [To the Druses.] He? Bring him forth!

Since so you needs will have it, I assent. You'd judge him, say you, on the spot - confound The sorcerer in his very circle? Where 's Our short black-bearded sallow friend who swore He'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by onc stab? Bring Djabal forth at once!

Druses. Ay, bring him forth!

The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and silk,

And we're the Patriarch's children — true men, we! Where is the glory? Show us all the glory!

Khalil. You dare not so insult him! What, not

(I tell thee, Nuncio, these are uninstructed, Untrusted: they know nothing of our Khalif!) 130 — Not see that if he lets a doubt arise 'T is but to give yourselves the chance of seeming To have some influence in your own return! That all may say ye would have trusted him Without the all-convincing glory — ay,

And did! Embrace the occasion, friends! For, think—

What wonder when his change takes place? But now For your sakes, he should not reveal himself. No: could I ask and have, I would not ask The change yet!

Enter DJABAL and Loys.

Spite of all, reveal thyself! 140
I had said, pardon them for me — for Anael —
For our sakes pardon these besotted men —
Ay, for thine own — they hurt not thee! Yet now
One thought swells in me and keeps down all else.
This Nuncio couples shame with thee, has called
Imposture thy whole course, all bitter things
Has said: he is but an old fretful man!
Hakeem — nay, I must call thee Hakeem now —
Reveal thyself! See! Where is Anael? See!

Loys [to DJABAL]. Here are thy people. Keep
thy word to me!

Djabal. Who of my people hath accused me? Nuncio.

So this is Djabal, Hakeem, and what not?
A fit deed, Loys, for thy first Knight's day!
May it be augury of thy after-life!
Ever prove truncheon of the Church as now
That, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge
Of the Isle here, I claim thee [turning to DJABAL] as
these bid me

these bid me,
Forfeit for murder done thy lawful prince,
Thou conjurer that peep'st and mutterest!
Why should I hold thee from their hands? (Spells,
children?

But hear how I dispose of all his spells!)

Thou art a prophet? — wouldst entice thy tribe From me? — thou workest miracles? Attend! Let him but move me with his spells!) I, Nuncio . . . Djabal. . . . Which how thou camest to be, I

say not now,

Though I have also been at Stamboul, Luke!
Ply thee with spells, forsooth! What need of spells?
If Venice, in her Admiral's person, stoop
To ratify thy compact with her foe,
The Hospitallers, for this Isle — withdraw
Her warrant of the deed which reinstates
My people in their freedom, tricked away
By him I slew, — refuse to convoy us
To Lebanon and keep the Isle we leave —
Then will be time to try what spells can do!
Dost thou dispute the Republic's power?

Nuncio. Lo ye!

He tempts me too, the wily exorcist!
No! The renowned Republic was and is
The Patriarch's friend: 't is not for courting Venice
That I — that these implore thy blood of me. 180
Lo ye, the subtle miscreant! Ha, so subtle?
Ye, Druses, hear him. Will ye be deceived?
How he evades me! Where 's the miracle
He works? I bid him to the proof — fish up
Your galley-full of bezants that he sank!
That were a miracle! One miracle!
Enough of trifling, for it chafes my years.
I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand forth
To save you from the good Republic's rage
When she shall find her fleet was summoned here 190
To aid the mummeries of a knave like this.

[As the Druses hesitate, his Attendants whisper. Ah, well suggested! Why, we hold the while One who, his close confederate till now,

Confesses Djabal at the last a cheat, And every miracle a cheat. Who throws me His head? I make three offers, once I offer,— And twice . . .

Let who moves perish at my foot! Djabal.Khalil. Thanks, Hakeem, thanks! Oh, Anael, Maani,

Why tarry they?

Druses [to each other]. He can! He can! Live

[To the Nuncio.] I say he can, old man! Thou know'st him not. 200

Live fire like that thou seest now in his eyes, Plays fawning round him. See! The change begins. All the brow lightens as he lifts his arm.

Look not at me! It was not I!

Djabal. What Druse Accused me, as he saith? I bid each bone Crumble within that Druse! None, Loys, none Of my own people, as thou said'st, have raised A voice against me.

Nuncio [aside]. Venice to come! Death! Djabal [continuing]. Confess and go unscathed,

however false!

Seest thou my Druses, Luke? I would submit 210 To thy pure malice did one Druse confess! How said I, Loys?

Nuncio [to his Attendants who whisper]. Ah, ye counsel so?

[Aloud.] Bring in the witness, then, who, first of all, Disclosed the treason! Now I have thee, wizard! Ye hear that? If one speaks, he bids you tear him Joint after joint: well then, one does speak! One, Befooled by Djabal, even as yourselves,

But who hath voluntarily proposed

To expiate, by confessing thus, the fault Of having trusted him. [They bring in a veiled Druse.

Loys. Now, Djabal, now! 220
Nuncio. Friend, Djabal fronts thee! Make a
ring, sons. Speak!

Expose this Djabal — what he was, and how: The wiles he used, the aims he cherished: all,

Explicitly as late 't was spoken to these My servants: I absolve and pardon thee.

Loys. Thou hast the dagger ready, Djabal?

Djabal. Speak,

Recreant!

Druses. Stand back, fool! farther! Suddenly You shall see some huge serpent glide from under The empty vest, or down will thunder crash! Back, Khalil!

Khalil. I go back? Thus go I back! 230 [To Anael.] Unveil! Nay, thou shalt face the

Khalif! Thus!

[He tears away Anael's veil; Djabal folds his arms and bows his head; the Druses fall back; Loys springs from the side of Djabal and the Nuncio.

Loys. Then she was true — she only of them all! True to her eyes — may keep those glorious eyes, And now be mine, once again mine! Oh, Anael! Dared I think thee a partner in his crime — That blood could soil that hand? nay, 't is mine —

Anael,

— Not mine? — who offer thee before all these My heart, my sword, my name — so thou wilt say

That Djabal, who affirms thou art his bride, Lies — say but that he lies!

Djabal. Thou, Anael?

240

Loys. Nay, Djabal, nay, one chance for me—the last!

Thou hast had every other; thou hast spoken Days, nights, what falsehood listed thee — let me Speak first now; I will speak now!

Nuncio.

Loys, pause!
Thou art the Duke's son, Bretagne's choicest stock,
Loys of Druex, God's sepulchre's first sword:
This wilt thou spit on, this degrade, this trample
To earth?

Loys [to Anael]. Who had foreseen that one day Loys

Would stake these gifts against some other good In the whole world? I give them thee! I would 250 My strong will might bestow real shape on them, That I might see, with my own eyes, thy foot Tread on their very neck! 'T is not by gifts I put aside this Djabal: we will stand — We do stand, see, two men! Djabal, stand forth! Who 's worth her, I or thou? I — who for Anael Uprightly, purely kept my way, the long True way — left thee each by-path, boldly lived Without the lies and blood, — or thou, or thou? Me! love me, Anael! Leave the blood and him! 260 [To Djabal.] Now speak — now, quick on this that I have said. —

Thou with the blood, speak if thou art a man!

Djabal [to Anael]. And was it thou betrayedst me?

T is well!

I have deserved this of thee, and submit.

Nor 't is much evil thou inflictest: life
Ends here. The cedars shall not wave for us:
For there was crime, and must be punishment.
See fate! By thee I was seduced, by thee
I perish: yet do I — can I repent?

I with my Arab instinct, thwarted ever 270 By my Frank policy, — and with, in turn, My Frank brain, thwarted by my Arab heart — While these remained in equipoise, I lived - Nothing; had either been predominant, As a Frank schemer or an Arab mystic, I had been something; — now, each has destroyed The other — and behold, from out their crash, A third and better nature rises up — My mere man's-nature! And I yield to it: I love thee, I who did not love before! 280 Anael. Djabal! It seemed love, but it was not love: Djabal. How could I love while thou adoredst me? Now thou despisest, art above me so Immeasurably! Thou, no other, doomest My death now; this my steel shall execute Thy judgment; I shall feel thy hand in it. Oh luxury to worship, to submit, Transcended, doomed to death by thee! My Djabal! Anael. Djabal. Dost hesitate? I force thee then. Approach, Druses! for I am out of reach of fate; 290 No further evil waits me. Speak the doom! Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and hear, Loys! Anael. Hakeem! [She falls dead. The Druses scream, grovelling before him. Ah Hakeem! — not on me thy wrath!

Biamrallah, pardon! never doubted I! Ha, dog, how sayest thou?

They surround and seize the Nuncio and his Guards. Loys flings himself upon the body of Anael, on which Djabal continues to gaze as stupefied.

Nuncio. Caitiffs! Have ye eyes? Whips, racks should teach you! What, his fools? his dupes?

Leave me! Unhand me!

Khalil [approaching DJABAL timidly]. Save her for my sake!

She was already thine; she would have shared To-day thine exaltation: think, this day Her hair was plaited thus because of thee!

Yes, feel the soft bright hair — feel!

Nuncio [struggling with those who have seized him].

What, because

His leman dies for him? You think it hard To die? Oh, would you were at Rhodes, and choice Of deaths should suit you!

Khalil [bending over Anael's body]. Just restore

her life!

So little does it! there — the eyelids tremble! 'T was not my breath that made them: and the lips Move of themselves. I could restore her life! Hakeem, we have forgotten — have presumed On our free converse: we are better taught. See, I kiss — how I kiss thy garment's hem 310 For her! She kisses it — Oh, take her deed In mine! Thou dost believe now, Anael? — See, She smiles! Were her lips open o'er the teeth Thus, when I spoke first? She believes in thee! Go not without her to the cedars, lord! Or leave us both — I cannot go alone! I have obeyed thee, if I dare so speak: Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal knew? Thou feelest then my tears fall hot and fast Upon thy hand, and yet thou speakest not? 320 Ere the Venetian trumpet sound — ere thou Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! save thou her!

Nuncio. And the accursed Republic will arrive And find me in their toils — dead, very like, Under their feet! What way — not one way yet To foil them? None? [Observing DJABAL's face. What ails the Khalif? Ah, That ghastly face! A way to foil them yet! [To the Druses.] Look to your Khalif, Druses! that face God Hakeem's? Where is triumph, — where is . . . what. Said he of exaltation — hath he promised 330 So much to-day? Why then, exalt thyself! Cast off that husk, thy form, set free thy soul In splendor! Now, bear witness! here I stand — I challenge him exalt himself, and I Become, for that, a Druse like all of you! The Druses. Exalt thyself! Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! Djabal [advances]. I can confess now all from first to last. There is no longer shame for me. I am . . . [Here the Venetian trumpet sounds: the Druses shout, DJABAL'S eye catches the expression of those about him, and, as the old dream comes back, he is again confident and inspired. — Am I not Hakeem? And ye would have crawled But yesterday within these impure courts Where now ye stand erect! Not grand enough? — What more could be conceded to such beasts As all of you, so sunk and base as you, Than a mere man? A man among such beasts Was miracle enough: yet him you doubt,

Him you forsake, him fain would you destroy — With the Venetians at your gate, the Nuncio

Thus — (see the baffled hypocrite!) and, best, The Prefect there!

Druses. No, Hakeem, ever thine!

Nuncio. He lies — and twice he lies — and thrice he lies! 350

Exalt thyself, Mahound! Exalt thyself!

Diabal. Druses! we shall henceforth be far

awav —

Out of mere mortal ken — above the cedars — But we shall see ye go, hear ye return, Repeopling the old solitudes, — through thee. My Khalil! Thou art full of me: I fill Thee full — my hands thus fill thee! Yestereve, — Nay, but this morn, I deemed thee ignorant Of all to do, requiring word of mine To teach it: now, thou hast all gifts in one, 360 With truth and purity go other gifts, All gifts come clustering to that. Go, lead My people home whate'er betide!

[Turning to the Druses.] Ye take

This Khalil for my delegate? To him Bow as to me? He leads to Lebanon — Ye follow?

Druses. We follow! Now exalt thyself!
Djabal [raises Loys]. Then to thee, Loys!
I wronged thee, Loys!

How

Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt have full revenge, Fit for thy noble self, revenge — and thus. Thou, loaded with such wrongs, the princely soul, The first sword of Christ's sepulchre — thou shalt Guard Khalil and my Druses home again! Justice, no less, God's justice and no more, For those I leave! To seeking this, devote Some few days out of thy Knight's brilliant life: And, this obtained them, leave their Lebanon,

My Druses' blessing in thine ears — (they shall Bless thee with blessing sure to have its way) — One cedar-blossom in thy dueal cap, 379 One thought of Anael in thy heart, — perchance, One thought of him who thus, to bid thee speed, His last word to the living speaks! This done, Resume thy eourse, and, first amidst the first In Europe, take my heart along with thee! Go boldly, go serenely, go augustly — What shall withstand thee then? [He bends over Anael.] And last to thee! Ah, did I dream I was to have, this day, Exalted thee? A vain dream: hast thou not Won greater exaltation? What remains But press to thee, exalt myself to thee? 390 Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul!

[He stabs himself. As he falls, supported by Khalil and Loys, the Venetians enter; the

Admiral advances.

Admiral. God and St. Mark for Venice! Plant the Lion!

[At the clash of the planted standard, the Druses shout and move tumultuously forward, Loys drawing his sword.

Djabal [leading them a few steps between Khall and Loys]. On to the Mountain! At the Mountain, Druses!

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

A TRAGEDY

1843

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

PERSONS

MILDRED TRESHAM.
GUENDOLEN TRESHAM.
THOROLD, Earl Tresham.
AUSTIN TRESHAM.
HENRY, Earl Mertoun.
GERARD, and other retainers of Lord Tresham.

Тіме, 17—

ACT I

Scene I — The interior of a lodge in Lord Tres-Ham's park. Many Retainers crowded at the window, supposed to command a view of the entrance to his mansion. Gerard, the warrener, his back to a table on which are flagons, etc.

1st Retainer. Ay, do! push, friends, and then you'll push down me!

— What for? Does any hear a runner's foot Or a steed's trample or a coach-wheel's cry? Is the Earl come or his least poursuivant? But there 's no breeding in a man of you Save Gerard yonder: here 's a half-place yet, Old Gerard!

Gerard. Save your courtesies, my friend.

Here is my place.

2nd Retainer. Now, Gerard, out with it!
What makes you sullen, this of all the days
I' the year? To-day that young rich bountiful 10
Handsome Earl Mertoun, whom alone they match
With our Lord Tresham through the country-side,
Is coming here in utmost bravery
To ask our master's sister's hand?

Gerard. What then? What then? Why, you, she

speaks to, if she meets

Your worship, smiles on as you hold apart
The boughs to let her through her forest walks,
You, always favorite for your no-deserts,
You've heard, these three days, how Earl Mertoun
sues

To lay his heart and house and broad lands too
At Lady Mildred's feet: and while we squeeze
Ourselves into a mousehole lest we miss
One congee of the least page in his train,
You sit o' one side — "there's the Earl," say I —
"What then?" say you!

3rd Retainer. I 'll wager he has let

Both swans he tamed for Lady Mildred swim Over the falls and gain the river!

Gerard. Ralph,

Is not to-morrow my inspecting-day For you and for your hawks?

4th Retainer. Let Gerard be!

He's coarse-grained, like his carved black cross-bow stock.

Ha, look now, while we squabble with him, look! Well done, now — is not this beginning, now,

To purpose?

1st Retainer. Our retainers look as fine—
That 's comfort. Lord, how Richard holds himself

With his white staff! Will not a knave behind

Prick him upright?

4th Retainer. He's only bowing, fool! The Earl's man bent us lower by this much.

1st Retainer. That 's comfort. Here 's a very

cavalcade!

3rd Retainer. I don't see wherefore Richard, and

his troop

Of silk and silver varlets there, should find
Their perfumed selves so indispensable

On high days, holidays! Would it so disgrace

Our family, if I, for instance, stood —

In my right hand a cast of Swedish hawks,

A leash of greyhounds in my left? —

Gerard. — With Hugh

The logman for supporter, in his right

The bill-hook, in his left the brushwood-shears!

3rd Retainer. Out on you, crab! What next, what next? The Earl!

1st Retainer. Oh Walter, groom, our horses, do they match

The Earl's? Alas, that first pair of the six — 50 They paw the ground — Ah Walter! and that

brute

Just on his haunches by the wheel!

6th Retainer. Ay — ay!

You, Philip, are a special hand, I hear,

At soups and sauces: what 's a horse to you?

D' ye mark that beast they 've slid into the midst So cunningly? — then, Philip, mark this further;

No leg has he to stand on!

1st Retainer. No? That 's comfort.

2nd Retainer. Peace, Cook! The Earl descends.

Well, Gerard, see

The Earl at least! Come, there 's a proper man, I hope! Why, Ralph, no falcon, Pole or Swede, 60 Has got a starrier eye.

His eves are blue: 3rd Retainer.

But leave my hawks alone!

So young, and yet 4th Retainer.

So tall and shapely!

5th Retainer. Here's Lord Tresham's self! There now — there 's what a nobleman should be! He's older, graver, loftier, he's more like

A House's head.

2nd Retainer. But you'd not have a boy — And what 's the Earl beside? — possess too soon

That stateliness?

1st Retainer. Our master takes his hand — Richard and his white staff are on the move — Back fall our people — (tsh! — there 's Timothy 70 Sure to get tangled in his ribbon-ties,

And Peter's cursed rosette's a-coming off!) — At last I sec our lord's back and his friend's;

And the whole beautiful bright company

Close round them — in they go! [Jumping down from the window-bench, and making for the table and its jugs.

Good health, long life,

Great joy to our Lord Tresham and his House! 6th Retainer. My father drove his father first to court.

After his marriage-day — ay, did he!

2nd Retainer. God bless Lord Tresham, Lady Mildred, and the Earl! 79 Here, Gerard, reach your beaker!

Gerard. Drink, my boys!

100

Don't mind me — all 's not right about me — drink! 2nd Retainer [aside]. He 's vexed, now, that he let the show escape!

[To Gerard.] Remember that the Earl returns

this way.

Gerard. That way?

2nd Retainer. Just so.

Gerard. Then my way 's here. [Goes. 2nd Retainer. Old Gerard

Will die soon — mind, I said it! He was used

To care about the pitifullest thing

That touched the House's honor, not an eye But his could see wherein: and on a cause

Of scarce a quarter this importance, Gerard

Fairly had fretted flesh and bone away
In cares that this was right, nor that was wrong,

Such point decorous, and such square by rule —

He knew such niceties, no herald more:

And now — you see his humor: die he will!

2nd Retainer. God help him! Who's for the

T!-

great servants'-hall

To hear what 's going on inside? They 'd follow Lord Tresham into the saloon.

3rd Retainer.

4th Retainer. I!—

Leave Frank alone for catching, at the door, Some hint of how the parley goes inside!

Prosperity to the great House once more!

Here's the last drop!

1st Retainer. Have at you! Boys, hurrah!

Scene II — A Saloon in the Mansion.

Enter LORD TRESHAM, LORD MERTOUN, AUSTIN, and Guendolen.

Tresham. I welcome you, Lord Mertoun, yet once more,

To this ancestral roof of mine. Your name — Noble among the noblest in itself, Yet taking in your person, fame avers, New price and lustre, — (as that gem you wear, Transmitted from a hundred knightly breasts, Fresh chased and set and fixed by its last lord, Seems to re-kindle at the core) — your name Would win you welcome!

Mertoun. Thanks!

Tresham. - But add to that, The worthiness and grace and dignity 10 Of your proposal for uniting both Our Houses even closer than respect Unites them now — add these, and you must grant One favor more, nor that the least, — to think The welcome I should give; — 't is given! My lord, My only brother, Austin: he 's the king's. Our cousin, Lady Guendolen — betrothed

To Austin: all are yours.

Mertoun. I thank you — less For the expressed commendings which your seal, And only that, authenticates — forbids My putting from me . . . to my heart I take Your praise . . . but praise less claims my gratitude, Than the indulgent insight it implies Of what must needs be uppermost with one Who comes, like me, with the bare leave to ask, In weighed and measured unimpassioned words,

A gift, which, if as calmly 't is denied,
He must withdraw, content upon his cheek,
Despair within his soul. That I dare ask
Firmly, near boldly, near with confidence
That gift, I have to thank you. Yes, Lord Tresham,
I love your sister — as you 'd have one love
That lady . . . oh more, more I love her! Wealth,
Rank, all the world thinks me, they 're yours, you
know,

To hold or part with, at your choice — but grant My true self, me without a rood of land, A piece of gold, a name of yesterday,

Grant me that lady, and you . . . Death or life? Guendolen [apart to Austin]. Why, this is loving, Austin!

Austin. He's so young!
Guendolen. Young? Old enough, I think, to
half surmise

He never had obtained an entrance here, Were all this fear and trembling needed.

Austin. Hush!

He reddens.

Guendolen. Mark him, Austin; that 's true love! Ours must begin again.

Tresham. We'll sit, my lord.

Ever with best desert goes diffidence.

I may speak plainly nor be misconceived.

That I am wholly satisfied with you

On this occasion, when a falcon's eye

Were dull compared with mine to search out faults, Is somewhat. Mildred's hand is hers to give

Or to refuse.

Mertoun. But you, you grant my suit? I have your word if hers?

Tresham. My best of words

If hers encourage you. I trust it will. Have you seen Lady Mildred, by the way?

Mertoun. I . . . I . . . our two demesnes, re-

member, touch;

After my stricken game: the heron roused
Deep in my woods, has trailed its broken wing
Thro' thicks and glades a mile in yours, — or else
Some eyass ill-reclaimed has taken flight
And lured me after her from tree to tree,
I marked not whither. I have come upon
The lady's wondrous beauty unaware,
And — and then . . . I have seen her.

Guendolen [aside to Austin]. Note that mode Of faltering out that, when a lady passed, He, having eyes, did see her! You had said—"On such a day I scanned her, head to foot; Observed a red, where red should not have been, Outside her elbow; but was pleased enough

70

Upon the whole." Let such irreverent talk

Be lessoned for the future!

May be said briefly. She has never known
A mother's care; I stand for father too.
Her beauty is not strange to you, it seems—
You cannot know the good and tender heart,
Its girl's trust and its woman's constancy,
How pure yet passionate, how calm yet kind,
How grave yet joyous, how reserved yet free
As light where friends are—how imbued with lore
The world most prizes, yet the simplest, yet

80
The . . . one might know I talked of Mildred—
thus

We brothers talk!

Mertoun. I thank you.

Tresham. In a word, Control's not for this lady; but her wish To please me outstrips in its subtlety My power of being pleased: herself creates The want she means to satisfy. My heart Prefers your suit to her as 't were its own. Can I say more?

Mertoun. No more—thanks, thanks—no more!

Tresham. This matter then discussed . . .

Mertoun. — We'll waste no breath
On aught less precious. I'm beneath the roof 90
Which holds her: while I thought of that, my speech
To you would wander — as it must not do,
Since as you favor me I stand or fall.
I pray you suffer that I take my leave!

Tresham. With less regret 't is suffered, that

again

We meet, I hope, so shortly.

Mertoun. We? again? —

Ah yes, forgive me — when shall . . . you will crown

Your goodness by forthwith apprising me When . . . if . . . the lady will appoint a day For me to wait on you — and her.

Tresham. So soon 100

As I am made acquainted with her thoughts
On your proposal — howsoe'er they lean —
A messenger shall bring you the result.

Mertoun. You cannot bind me more to you, my

lord.

Farewell till we renew . . . I trust, renew A converse ne'er to disunite again.

Tresham. So may it prove!

Mertoun. You, lady, you, sir, take

My humble salutation!

Guendolen and Austin. Thanks! Within there! Tresham. Servants enter. Tresham conducts Mertoun to the door. Meantime Austin remarks,

Here I have an advantage of the Earl, Confess now! I'd not think that all was safe Because my lady's brother stood my friend! Why, he makes sure of her — "do you say, yes — She'll not say, no," — what comes it to beside? I should have praved the brother, "speak this speech.

For Heaven's sake urge this on her — put in this — Forget not, as you'd save me, t' other thing, — Then set down what she says, and how she looks, And if she smiles, and" (in an under breath)

"Only let her accept me, and do you

And all the world refuse me, if you dare!" Guendolen. That way you'd take, friend Austin? What a shame

I was your cousin, tamely from the first Your bride, and all this fervor's run to waste! Do you know you speak sensibly to-day? The Earl's a fool.

Here 's Thorold. Tell him so! Austin. Tresham [returning]. Now, voices, voices! 'St! the lady 's first!

How seems he? — seems he not . . . come, faith give fraud

The mercy-stroke whenever they engage!

Down with fraud, up with faith! How seems the Earl?

A name! a blazon! if you knew their worth, 130 As you will never! come — the Earl?

Guendolen. He's young.

Tresham. What 's she? an infant save in heart and brain. Young! Mildred is fourteen, remark! And you . . . Austin, how old is she? Guendolen. There's tact for you! I meant that being young was good excuse If one should tax him . . . Tresham. Well? Guendolen. — With lacking wit. Tresham. He lacked wit? Where might he lack wit, so please you? Guendolen. In standing straighter than the steward's rod And making you the tiresomest harangue, Instead of slipping over to my side 140 And softly whispering in my ear, "Sweet lady, Your cousin there will do me detriment He little dreams of: he 's absorbed, I see, In my old name and fame — be sure he'll leave My Mildred, when his best account of me Is ended, in full confidence I wear My grandsire's periwig down either cheek. I 'm lost unless your gentleness vouchsafes'' Tresham. . . . "To give a best of best accounts, vourself. Of me and my demerits." You are right! 150 He should have said what now I say for him. You golden creature, will you help us all? Here's Austin means to youch for much, but you — You are . . . what Austin only knows! Come up, All three of us: she's in the library

No doubt, for the day 's wearing fast. Precede!

Guendolen. Austin, how we must —!

Tresham. Must what? Must speak truth,

Malignant tongue! Detect one fault in him! I challenge you!

Guendolen. Witchcraft 's a fault in him,

For you're bewitched.

Tresham. What 's urgent we obtain 160 Is, that she soon receive him — say, to-morrow — Next day at furthest.

Guendolen. Ne'er instruct me!

Tresham. Come!

He 's out of your good graces, since for sooth,
He stood not as he 'd carry us by storm
With his perfections! You 're for the composed
Manly assured becoming confidence!
Get her to say, "to-morrow," and I'll give you . . .
I'll give you black Urganda, to be spoiled
With petting and snail-paces. Will you? Come!

Scene III — Mildred's chamber. A painted window overlooks the park. Mildred and Guenbolen.

Guendolen. Now, Mildred, spare those pains. I have not left

Our talkers in the library, and climbed
The wearisome ascent to this your bower
In company with you, — I have not dared . . .
Nay, worked such prodigics as sparing you
Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the flood,
Which Thorold seemed in very act to tell
— Or bringing Austin to pluck up that most
Firm-rooted heresy — your suitor's eyes,
He would maintain, were gray instead of blue — 10
I think I brought him to contrition! — Well,
I have not done such things, (all to deserve
A minute's quiet cousin's talk with you,)

To be dismissed so coolly.

Mildred. Guendolcn!

What have I done? what could suggest . .

Guendolen. There, there! Do I not comprehend vou 'd be alone

To throw those testimonies in a heap,

Thorold's enlargings, Austin's brevities,

With that poor silly heartless Guendolen's

Ill-timed misplaced attempted smartnesses —

And sift their sense out? now, I come to spare you

Nearly a whole night's labor. Ask and have!

Demand, be answered! Lack I ears and eyes?

Am I perplexed which side of the rock-table

The Conqueror dined on when he landed first,

Lord Mertoun's ancestor was bidden take —

The bow-hand or the arrow-hand's great meed?

Mildred, the Earl has soft blue eyes!

My brother — Mildred.

Did he . . . you said that he received him well? 29

Guendolen. If I said only "well" I said not much.

Oh, stay — which brother?

Thorold! who — who else? Mildred.

Guendolen. Thorold (a secret) is too proud by

Nay, hear me out — with us he 's even gentler Than we are with our birds. Of this great House The least retainer that e'cr caught his glance Would die for him, real dying — no mere talk: And in the world, the court, if men would cite The perfect spirit of honor, Thorold's name Rises of its clear nature to their lips. But he should take men's homage, trust in it,

And care no more about what drew it down.

He has desert, and that, acknowledgment;

Is he content?

40

Mildred.You wrong him, Guendolen. Guendolen. He's proud, confess; so proud with brooding o'er

The light of his interminable line, An ancestry with men all paladins,

And women all . . .

Dear Guendolen, 't is late! Mildred.

When yonder purple pane the climbing moon

Pierces, I know 't is midnight.

Guendolen. Well, that Thorold

Should rise up from such musings, and receive

One come audaciously to graft himself

Into this peerless stock, yet find no flaw, No slightest spot in such an one . . .

Mildred. Who finds

A spot in Mertoun?

Guendolen. Not your brother; therefore.

Not the whole world.

Mildred. I am weary, Guendolen.

Bear with me!

Guendolen. I am foolish.

Mildred. Oh no, kind!

But I would rest.

Guendolen. Good night and rest to you!

I said how gracefully his mantle lay Beneath the rings of his light hair?

Mildred. Brown hair.

Guendolen. Brown? why, it is brown: how could you know that?

Mildred. How? did not you - Oh, Austin't was, declared

His hair was light, not brown — my head! — and look.

The moon-beam purpling the dark chamber! Sweet, Good night!

Guendolen. Forgive me — sleep the soundlier for me!

[Going, she turns suddenly.

Mildred!

Perdition! all 's discovered! Thorold finds

— That the Earl's greatest of all grandmothers

Was grander daughter still — to that fair dame

Whose garter slipped down at the famous dance!

[Goes.]

Mildred. Is she — can she be really gone at last? My heart! I shall not reach the window. Needs 70

Must I have sinned much, so to suffer.

[She lifts the small lamp which is suspended before the Virgin's image in the window, and places it by the purple pane.

There!

[She returns to the seat in front.

Mildred and Mertoun! Mildred, with consent Of all the world and Thorold, Mertoun's bride! Too late! 'T is sweet to think of, sweeter still To hope for, that this blessed end soothes up The curse of the beginning; but I know It comes too late: 't will sweetest be of all To dream my soul away and die upon.

[A noise without.

The voice! Oh why, why glided sin the snake Into the paradise Heaven meant us both?

[The window opens softly. A low voice sings.

There's a woman like a dew-drop, she's so purer than the purest;

And her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith's the surest:

And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre

Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,

Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-

misted marble:

Then her voice's music . . . call it the well's bubbling the bird's warble!

[A figure wrapped in a mantle appears at the window.

And this woman says, "My days were sunless and my nights were moonless,

Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's

heart's outbreak tuneless,

If you loved me not!" And I who— (ah, for words of flame!) adore her,

Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before her—

[He enters, approaches her seat, and bends over her.

I may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice takes me,

And by noontide as by midnight make her mine, as hers she makes me!

[The Earl throws off his slouched hat and long cloak. My very heart sings, so I sing, Beloved!

Mildred. Sit, Henry — do not take my hand! Mertoun. 'T is mine.

The meeting that appalled us both so much Is ended.

Mildred. What begins now?

Mertoun. Happiness

Such as the world contains not.

Mildred. That is it.

Our happiness would, as you say, exceed

The whole world's best of blisses: we — do we Deserve that? Utter to your soul, what mine 100 Long since, Beloved, has grown used to hear, Like a death-knell, so much regarded once, And so familiar now; this will not be!

Mertoun. Oh, Mildred, have I met your brother's

face?

Compelled myself — if not to speak untruth, Yet to disguise, to shun, to put aside The truth, as — what had e'er prevailed on me Save you, to venture? Have I gained at last Your brother, the one scarer of your dreams, And waking thoughts' sole apprehension too? 110 Does a new life, like a young sunrise, break On the strange unrest of our night, confused With rain and stormy flaw — and will you see No dripping blossoms, no fire-tinted drops On each live spray, no vapor steaming up, And no expressless glory in the East? When I am by you, to be ever by you, When I have won you and may worship you, Oh, Mildred, can you say "this will not be"? Mildred. Sin has surprised us, so will punishment. Mertoun. No — me alone, who sinned alone! Mildred. The night

You likened our past life to — was it storm

Throughout to you then, Henry?

Of your life Mertoun. I spoke — what am I, what my life, to waste A thought about when you are by me? — you It was, I said my folly called the storm

And pulled the night upon. 'T was day with me—

Perpetual dawn with me.

Mildred. Come what, come will,

You have been happy: take my hand!

How good Mertoun [after a pause]. Your brother is! I figured him a cold — Shall I say, haughty man? They told me all. Mildred. I know all. Mertoun. It will soon be over. Over? Mildred. Oh, what is over? what must I live through And say, "'t is over"? Is our meeting over? Have I received in presence of them all The partner of my guilty love — with brow Trying to seem a maiden's brow — with lips Which make believe that when they strive to form Replies to you and tremble as they strive, It is the nearest ever they approached 140 Astranger's . . . Henry, yours that stranger's . . . lip -With cheek that looks a virgin's, and that is . . . Ah God, some prodigy of thine will stop This planned piece of deliberate wickedness In its birth even! some fierce leprous spot Will mar the brow's dissimulating! I Shall murmur no smooth speeches got by heart, But, frenzied, pour forth all our woful story, The love, the shame, and the despair — with them Round me aghast as round some cursed fount 150 That should spirt water, and spouts blood. I'll not . . . Henry, you do not wish that I should draw This vengeance down? I'll not affect a grace That 's gone from mc — gone once, and gone forever! Mertoun. Mildred, my honor is your own. I 'll share

Disgrace I cannot suffer by myself.

A word informs your brother I retract

This morning's offer; time will yet bring forth Some better way of saving both of us.

Mildred. I'll meet their faces, Henry! 159 Mertoun. When? to-morrow!

Get done with it!

Mildred. Oh, Henry, not to-morrow! Next day! I never shall prepare my words And looks and gestures sooner. — How you must

Despise me!

Mertoun. Mildred, break it if you choose, A heart the love of you uplifted — still Uplifts, thro' this protracted agony. To heaven! but Mildred, answer me, — first pace The chamber with me — once again — now, say Calmly the part, the . . . what it is of me You see contempt (for you did say contempt) 170 — Contempt for you in! I would pluck it off And east it from me! — but no — no, you 'll not Repeat that? — will you, Mildred, repeat that? Mildred. Dear Henry!

Mertoun. I was scarce a boy — e'en now What am I more? And you were infantine When first I met you; why, your hair fell loose On either side! My fool's-cheek reddens now Only in the recalling how it burned That morn to see the shape of many a dream — You know we boys are prodigal of charms 180 To her we dream of — I had heard of one, Had dreamed of her, and I was close to her, Might speak to her, might live and die her own, Who knew? I spoke. Oh, Mildred, feel you not That now, while I remember every glance Of yours, each word of yours, with power to test And weigh them in the diamond scales of pride, Resolved the treasure of a first and last

Heart's love shall have been bartered at its worth, — That now I think upon your purity 190 And utter ignorance of guilt — your own Or other's guilt — the girlish undisguised Delight at a strange novel prize — (I talk A silly language, but interpret, you!) If I, with fancy at its full, and reason Scarce in its germ, enjoined you secrecy, If you had pity on my passion, pity On my protested sickness of the soul To sit beside you, hear you breathe, and watch Your eyelids and the eyes beneath — if you 200 Accorded gifts and knew not they were gifts — If I grew mad at last with enterprise And must behold my beauty in her bower Or perish — (I was ignorant of even My own desires - what then were you?) if sorrow -Sin — if the end came — must I now renounce My reason, blind myself to light, say truth Is false and lie to God and my own soul? Contempt were all of this!

Mildred. Do you believe . . .
Or, Henry, I'll not wrong you — you believe 210
That I was ignorant. I scarce grieve o'er

The past. We 'll love on; you will love me still.

Mertoun. Oh, to love less what one has injured!

Dove,

Whose pinion I have rashly hurt, my breast—Shall myheart's warmth not nurse thee into strength? Flower I have crushed, shall I not care for thee? Bloom o'er my crest, my fight-mark and device! Mildred, I love you and you love me.

Mildred.

Go!

Be that your last word. I shall sleep to-night. 219

Mertoun. This is not our last meeting?

240

Mildred. One night more.

Mertoun. And then — think, then!

Mildred. Then, no sweet courtship-days,

No dawning consciousness of love for us, No strange and palpitating births of sense

From words and looks, no innocent fears and hopes, Reserves and confidences: morning's over!

Mertoun. How else should love's perfected noon-

tide follow?

All the dawn promised shall the day perform.

Mildred. So may it be! but —

You are cautious, Love?

Are sure that unobserved you scaled the walls?

Mertoun. Oh, trust me! Then our final meeting's fixed 230

To-morrow night?

Mildred. Farewell! Stay, Henry . . . where-

His foot is on the yew-tree bough; the turf Receives him: now the moonlight as he runs Embraces him — but he must go — is gone.

Ah, once again he turns—thanks, thanks, my Love!

He's gone. Oh, I'll believe him every word!

I was so young, I loved him so, I had No mother, God forgot me, and I fell.

There may be pardon yet: all 's doubt beyond.

Surely the bitterness of death is past.

ACT II

Scene — The Library.

Enter Lord Tresham, hastily.

Tresham. This way! In, Gerard, quick!
[As Gerard enters, Tresham secures the door.
Now, speak! or, wait—

I'll bid you speak directly. [Seats himself.

Now repeat

Firmly and circumstantially the tale
You just now told me; it eludes me; either
I did not listen, or the half is gone
Away from me. How long have you lived here?
Here in my house, your father kept our woods
Before you?

Gerard. — As his father did, my lord. I have been eating, sixty years almost,

Your bread.

Tresham. Yes, yes. You ever were of all 10
The servants in my father's house, I know,
The trusted one. You'll speak the truth.

Gerard.

I'll speak

God's truth. Night after night . . .

Tresham. Since when?
Gerard. At least

A month — each midnight has some man access To Lady Mildred's chamber.

Tresham. Tush, "access" —

No wide words like "access" to me!

Gerard.

He runs

Along the woodside, crosses to the South,
Takes the left tree that ends the avenue . . .

Tresham. The last great yew-tree?

You might stand upon Gerard. The main boughs like a platform. Then he . . . Tresham. Quick! Gerard. Climbs up, and, where they lessen at the top, — I cannot see distinctly, but he throws, I think — for this I do not youch — a line That reaches to the lady's casement— Tresham. He enters not! Gerard, some wretched fool Dares pry into my sister's privacy! When such are young, it seems a precious thing To have approached, — to merely have approached, Got sight of, the abode of her they set Their frantic thoughts upon. He does not enter? 30 Gerard? Gerard. There is a lamp that 's full i' the midst, Under a red square in the painted glass Of Lady Mildred's . . . Leave that name out! Well? Tresham. That lamp? Gerard. — Is moved at midnight higher up To one pane — a small dark-blue pane; he waits For that among the boughs: at sight of that, I see him, plain as I see you, my lord, Open the lady's casement, enter there . . . 38 Tresham. — And stay? An hour, two hours. Gerard. And this you saw Tresham. Once? — twice? — quick! Twenty times. Gerard. And what brings you Tresham. Under the yew-trees?

Gerard. The first night I left
My range so far, to track the stranger stag

That broke the pale, I saw the man.

Trresham.

Yet sent

No cross-bow shaft through the marauder?

Gerard.

Bu

He came, my lord, the first time he was seen, In a great moonlight, light as any day, From Lady Mildred's chamber.

Tresham [after a pause]. You have no cause

— Who could have cause to do my sister wrong?

Gerard. Oh, my lord, only once — let me this once

Speak what is on my mind! Since first I noted 50

All this, I 've groaned as if a fiery net

Plucked me this way and that — fire if I turned

To her, fire if I turned to you, and fire

If down I flung myself and strove to die.

The lady could not have been seven years old

When I was trusted to conduct her safe

Through the deer-herd to stroke the snow-white

I brought to eat bread from her tiny hand
Within a month. She ever had a smile
To greet me with — she . . . if it could undo 60
What's done, to lop each limb from off this trunk . . .
All that is foolish talk, not fit for you —
I mean, I could not speak and bring her hurt
For Heaven's compelling. But when I was fixed
To hold my peace, each morsel of your food
Eaten beneath your roof, my birth-place too,
Choked me. I wish I had grown mad in doubts
What it behoved me do. This morn it seemed
Either I must confess to you, or die:
Now it is done, I seem the vilest worm
That crawls, to have betrayed my lady.

Tresham.

No —

No, Gerard!

fawn

Gerard. Let me go!

Tresham. A man, you say:

What man? Young? Not a vulgar hind? What dress?

Gerard. A slouched hat and a large dark foreign cloak

Wraps his whole form; even his face is hid;

But I should judge him young: no hind, be sure! Tresham. Why?

Gerard. He is ever armed: his sword projects

Beneath the cloak.

Tresham. Gerard, — I will not say

No word, no breath of this!

Gerard. Thanks, thanks, my lord!

[Goes.

90

Tresham [paces the room. After a pause]. Oh, thought's absurd!— as with some monstrous fact

80

Which, when ill thoughts beset us, seems to give Merciful God that made the sun and stars, The waters and the green delights of earth, The lie! I apprehend the monstrous fact—Yet know the maker of all worlds is good, And yield my reason up, inadequate To reconcile what yet I do behold—Blasting my sense! There 's cheerful day outside: This is my library, and this the chair

My father used to sit in carelessly

After his soldier-fashion, while I stood

Between his knees to question him: and here Gerard our gray retainer, — as he says,

Fed with our food, from sire to son, and age, —

Has told a story — I am to believe!

That Mildred . . . oh, no, no! both tales are true,

Her pure cheek's story and the forester's!

Would she, or could she, err — much less, confound

All guilts of treachery, of craft, of . . . Heaven Keep me within its hand! — I will sit here
Until thought settle and I see my course.
Avert, oh God, only this woe from me!

[As he sinks his head between his arms on the table, Guendolen's voice is heard at the door.

Lord Tresham! [She knocks.] Is Lord Tresham there?

[Tresham, hastily turning, pulls down the first book above him and opens it.

Tresham. Come in! [She enters.] Ha, Guen-

dolen! — good morning.

Guendolen. Nothing more?

Tresham. What should I say more?

Guendolen. Pleasant question! more? This more. Did I besiege poor Mildred's brain

Last night till close on morning with "the Earl,"
"The Farl" whose worth did Lassayanata

"The Earl" — whose worth did I asseverate Till I am very fain to hope that . . . Thorold,

What is all this? You are not well!

Tresham. Who, I? 110

You laugh at me.

Guendolen. Has what I'm fain to hope,

Arrived then? Does that huge tome show some blot

In the Earl's 'scutcheon come no longer back

Than Arthur's time?

Tresham. When left you Mildred's chamber?
Guendolen. Oh, late enough, I told you! The
main thing

To ask is, how I left her chamber, — sure, Content yourself, she'll grant this paragon

Of Earls no such ungracious . . .

Tresham. Send her here!

Guendolen. Thorold?

Tresham. I mean — acquaint her, Guendolen, — But mildly!

Guendolen. Mildly?

Tresham. Ah, you guessed aright!
I am not well: there is no hiding it.
But tell her I would see her at her leisure—
That is, at once! here in the library!
The passage in that old Italian book
We hunted for so long is found, say, found—
And if I let it slip again . . . you see,

That she must come — and instantly!

Guendolen.

I 'll die

Piecemeal, record that, if there have not gloomed Some blot i' the 'scutcheon!

Tresham.

Go! or, Guendolen,
Be you at call, — with Austin, if you choose, — 130
In the adjoining gallery! There, go!

[Guendolen goes.

Another lesson to me! You might bid
A child disguise his heart's sore, and conduct
Some sly investigation point by point
With a smooth brow, as well as bid me catch
The inquisitorial cleverness some praise.
If you had told me yesterday, "There's one
You needs must circumvent and practise with,
Entrap by policies, if you would worm
The truth out: and that one is — Mildred!" There,
There — reasoning is thrown away on it!
Prove she's unchaste . . . why, you may after

prove
That she 's a poisoner, traitress, what you will!
Where I can comprehend naught, naught 's to say.
Or do, or think. Force on me but the first
Abomination, — then outpour all plagues,
And I shall ne'er make count of them.

Enter MILDRED.

Mildred. What book Is it I wanted, Thorold? Guendolen Thought you were pale; you are not pale. That book? That's Latin surely. Mildred, here 's a line, Tresham. 150 (Don't lean on me: I 'll English it for you)
"Love conquers all things." What love conquers them? What love should you esteem — best love? Mildred. True love. Tresham. I mean, and should have said, whose love is best. Of all that love or that profess to love? Mildred. The list's so long: there's father's, mother's, husband's . . Tresham. Mildred, I do believe a brother's love For a sole sister must exceed them all. For see now, only see! there's no allow Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st gold 160 Of other loves — no gratitude to claim; You never gave her life, not even aught That keeps life — never tended her, instructed, Enriched her — so, your love can claim no right O'er her save pure love's claim: that 's what I call Freedom from earthliness. You'll never hope To be such friends, for instance, she and you, As when you hunted cowslips in the woods Or played together in the meadow hay. 169 Oh yes — with age, respect comes, and your worth Is felt, there 's growing sympathy of tastes, There's ripened friendship, there's confirmed es-

— Much head these make against the new-comer!

teem:

The startling apparition, the strange youth — Whom one half-hour's conversing with, or, say, Mere gazing at, shall change (beyond all change This Ovid ever sang about) your soul . . . Her soul, that is, — the sister's soul! With her 'T was winter yesterday; now, all is warmth, The green leaf's springing and the turtle's voice, 180 "Arise and come away!" Come whither? — far Enough from the esteem, respect, and all The brother's somewhat insignificant Array of rights! All which he knows before, Has calculated on so long ago! I think such love, (apart from yours and mine,) Contented with its little term of life, Intending to retire betimes, aware How soon the background must be place for it, — I think, am sure, a brother's love exceeds 200 All the world's love in its unworldliness. Mildred. What is this for? This, Mildred, is it for! Tresham. Or, no, I cannot go to it so soon! That 's one of many points my haste left out — Each day, each hour throws forth its silk-slight film Between the being tied to you by birth, And you, until those slender threads compose A web that shrouds her daily life of hopes And fears and fancies, all her life, from yours: So close you live and yet so far apart! 210 And must I rend this web, tear up, break down The sweet and palpitating mystery That makes her sacred? You — for you I mean, Shall I speak, shall I not speak? Mildred. Speak! Tresham. I will.

Is there a story men could — any man

Could tell of you, you would conceal from me? I 'll never think there 's falsehood on that lip. Say "There is no such story men could tell," And I'll believe you, though I disbelieve The world — the world of better men than I, 220 And women such as I suppose you. Speak! [After a pause.] Not speak? Explain then! Clear it up then! Move

Some of the miserable weight away

That presses lower than the grave! Not speak? Some of the dead weight, Mildred! Ah, if I Could bring myself to plainly make their charge Against you! Must I, Mildred? Silent still? [After a pause.] Is there a gallant that has night by

night Admittance to your chamber?

[After a pause.] Then, his name! Till now, I only had a thought for you: 230 But now, — his name!

Mildred.

Thorold, do you devise Fit expiation for my guilt, if fit There be! 'T is naught to say that I 'll endure And bless you, — that my spirit yearns to purge

Her stains off in the fierce renewing fire: But do not plunge me into other guilt!

Oh, guilt enough! I cannot tell his name.

Tresham. Then judge yourself! How should I

act? Pronounce!

Mildred. Oh, Thorold, you must never tempt me thus!

To die here in this chamber by that sword Would seem like punishment: so should I glide, Like an arch-cheat, into extremest bliss! "T were easily arranged for me: but you — What would become of you?

Become of me? I'll hide your shame and mine
From every eye; the dead must heave their hearts
Under the marble of our chapel-floor;
They cannot rise and blast you. You may wed
Your paramour above our mother's tomb;
Our mother cannot move from 'neath your foot. 250
We too will somehow wear this one day out:
But with to-morrow hastens here — the Earl!
The youth without suspicion . . . face can come
From Heaven, and heart from . . . whence proceed such hearts?

I have despatched last night at your command A missive bidding him present himself
To-morrow — here — thus much is said; the rest
Is understood as if 't were written down —
"His suit finds favor in your eyes." Now dictate
This morning's letter that shall countermand
Last night's — do dictate that!

Mildred. But, Thorold — if

I will receive him as I said?

Tresham. The Earl?

Mildred. I will receive him.

Tresham [starting up]. Ho there! Guendolen!

Guendolen and Austin enter.

And, Austin, you are welcome, too! Look here! The woman there!

Austin and Guendolen. How? Mildred?
Tresham. Mildred once!

Now the receiver night by night, when sleep Blesses the inmates of her father's house, — I say, the soft sly wanton that receives

Her guilt's accomplice 'neath this roof which holds

270

You, Guendolen, you, Austin, and has held A thousand Treshams — never one like her!
No lighter of the signal-lamp her quick
Foul breath near quenches in hot eagerness
To mix with breath as foul! no loosener
O' the lattice, practised in the stealthy tread,
The low voice and the noiseless come-and-go!
Not one composer of the bacchant's mien
Into — what you thought Mildred's, in a word!
Know her!

Guendolen. Oh, Mildred, look to me, at least! 279 Thorold — she 's dead, I 'd say, but that she stands

Rigid as stone and whiter!

Tresham. You have heard . . . Guendolen. Too much! You must proceed no further.

Mildred. Yes—Proceed! All 's truth. Go from me!

Tresham. All is truth, She tells you! Well, you know, or ought to know, All this I would forgive in her. I'd con Each precept the harsh world enjoins, I'd take Our ancestors' stern verdicts one by one, I'd bind myself before them to exact The prescribed vengeance — and one word of hers, The sight of her, the bare least memory 290 Of Mildred, my one sister, my heart's pride Above all prides, my all in all so long, Would scatter every trace of my resolve. What were it silently to waste away And see her waste away from this day forth, Two scathed things with leisure to repent, And grow acquainted with the grave, and die Tired out if not at peace, and be forgotten? It were not so impossible to bear.

But this — that, fresh from last night's pledge renewed

newed

Of love with the successful gallant there, She calmly bids me help her to entice, Inveigle an unconscious trusting youth

Who thinks her all that 's chaste and good and pure,

— Invites me to betray him who so fit As honor's self to cover shame's arch-deed?

— That she 'll receive Lord Mertoun — (her own phrase) —

This, who could bear? Why, you have heard of

thieves,

Stabbers, the earth's disgrace, who yet have laughed, "Talk not to me of torture — I'll betray 310 No comrade I've pledged faith to!" — you have heard

Of wretched women — all but Mildreds — tied By wild illicit ties to losels vile

You'd tempt them to forsake; and they'll reply

"Gold, friends, repute, I left for him, I find In him, why should I leave him then for gold,

Repute or friends?" — and you have felt your heart

Respond to such poor outcasts of the world

As to so many friends; bad as you please, You 've felt they were God's men and women still,

So, not to be disowned by you. But she

That stands there, calmly gives her lover up

As means to wed the Earl that she may hide Their intercourse the surelier: and, for this,

I curse her to her face before you all.

Shame hunt her from the earth! Then Heaven do right

To both! It hears me now — shall judge her then! [As MILDRED faints and falls, TRESHAM rushes out. Austin. Stay, Tresham, we'll accompany you!

We? Guendolen. What, and leave Mildred? We? Why, where 's my place But by her side, and where yours but by mine? Mildred — one word! Only look at me, then!

Austin. No, Guendolen! I echo Thorold's voice. She is unworthy to behold . . . Guendolen. If you spoke on reflection, and if I Approved your speech — if you (to put the thing At lowest) you the soldier, bound to make The king's cause yours and fight for it, and throw Regard to others of its right or wrong, — If with a death-white woman you can help, Let alone sister, let alone a Mildred, 340 You left her — or if I, her cousin, friend This morning, playfellow but yesterday, Who said, or thought at least a thousand times, "I'd serve you if I could," should now face round And say, "Ah, that 's to only signify I'd serve you while you're fit to serve yourself: So long as fifty eyes await the turn Of yours to forestall its yet half-formed wish, I'll proffer my assistance you'll not need—When every tongue is praising you, I'll join The praisers' chorus — when you 're hemmed about With lives between you and detraction — lives To be laid down if a rude voice, rash eye, Rough hand should violate the sacred ring Their worship throws about you, — then indeed, Who 'll stand up for you stout as I?" If so We said, and so we did, — not Mildred there Would be unworthy to behold us both, But we should be unworthy, both of us,

To be beheld by — by — your meanest dog,

360

Which, if that sword were broken in your face Before a crowd, that badge torn off your breast, And you cast out with hooting and contempt, — Would push his way thro' all the hooters, gain Your side, go off with you and all your shame To the next ditch you choose to die in! Austin, Do you love me? Here's Austin, Mildred, —here's Your brother says he does not believe half — No, nor half that — of all he heard! He says, Look up and take his hand!

Austin. Look up and take 370

My hand, dear Mildred!

Mildred. I — I was so young!

Beside, I loved him, Thorold — and I had

No mother; God forgot me: so, I fell.

Guendolen. Mildred!

Mildred. Require no further! Did I dream That I could palliate what is done? All 's true. Now, punish me! A woman takes my hand? Let go my hand! You do not know, I see. I thought that Thorold told you.

Guendolen What is this?

Where start you to?

Mildred. Oh, Austin, loosen me! 379 You heard the whole of it — your eyes were worse, In their surprise, than Thorold's! Oh, unless You stay to execute his sentence, loose

My hand! Has Thorold gone, and are you here? Guendolen. Here, Mildred, we two friends of

yours will wait

Your bidding; be you silent, sleep or muse! Only, when you shall want your bidding done, How can we do it if we are not by? Here 's Austin waiting patiently your will!

One spirit to command, and one to love

And to believe in it and do its best, 390 Poor as that is, to help it — why, the world Has been won many a time, its length and breadth, By just such a beginning! I believe Mildred. If once I threw my arms about your neck And sunk my head upon your breast, that I Should weep again. Let go her hand now, Austin! Guendolen. Wait for me. Pace the gallery and think On the world's seemings and realities, [Austin goes. Until I call you. No — I cannot weep. Mildred. No more tears from this brain — no sleep — no tears! O Guendolen, I love you! Yes: and "love" Guendolen. Is a short word that says so very much! It says that you confide in me. Confide! Mildred. Guendolen. Your lover's name, then! I've so much to learn, Ere I can work in your behalf! My friend, Mildred. You know I cannot tell his name. At least Guendolen. He is your lover? and you love him too? Mildred. Ah, do you ask me that? — but I am fallen So low! Guendolen. You love him still, then? My sole prop Mildred. Against the guilt that crushes me! I say, 410 Each night ere I lie down, "I was so young -I had no mother, and I loved him so!"

And then God seems indulgent, and I dare

Trust him my soul in sleep.

Guendolen. How could you let us

E'en talk to you about Lord Mertoun then?

Mildred. There is a cloud around me.

Guendolen. But you said

You would receive his suit in spite of this? *Mildred*. I say there is a cloud . . .

Guendolen. No cloud to me!

Lord Mertoun and your lover are the same! *Mildred*. What maddest fancy . . .

Guendolen [calling aloud]. Austin! (spare your pains—

When I have got a truth, that truth I keep) — Mildred. By all you love, sweet Guendolen, forbear!

Have I confided in you . . .

Guendolen. Just for this!

Austin! — Oh, not to guess it at the first! But I did guess it — that is, I divined,

Felt by an instinct how it was: why else

Should I pronounce you free from all that heap

Of sins which had been irredeemable?

I felt they were not yours — what other way
Than this, not yours? The secret 's wholly mine!

Mildred. If you would seeme die before his face...

Guendolen. I'd hold my peace! And if the Earl
returns

To-night?

Mildred. Ah Heaven, he 's lost!

Guendolen. I thought so. Austin!

Enter Austin.

Oh, where have you been hiding?

Austin. Thorold 's gone,
I know not how, across the meadow-land.

I watched him till I lost him in the skirts.

O' the beech-wood.

Guendolen. Gone? All thwarts us.

Mildred. Thorold too?

Guendolen. I have thought. First lead this Mildred to her room.

Go on the other side; and then we'll seek
Your brother: and I'll tell you, by the way,
The greatest comfort in the world. You said
There was a clue to all. Remember, Sweet,
He said there was a clue! I hold it. Come!

ACT III

Scene I — The end of the Yew-tree Avenue under Mildred's window. A light seen through a central red pane.

Enter Tresham through the trees.

Again here! But I cannot lose myself. The heath — the orchard—I have traversed glades And dells and bosky paths which used to lead Into green wild-wood depths, bewildering My boy's adventurous step. And now they tend Hither or soon or late; the blackest shade Breaks up, the througed trunks of the trees ope wide, And the dim turret I have fled from, fronts Again my step; the very river put Its arm about mc and conducted me 10 To this detested spot. Why then, I'll shun Their will no longer: do your will with me! Oh, bitter! To have reared a towering scheme Of happiness, and to behold it razed. Were nothing: all men hope, and see their hopes

Frustrate, and grieve awhile, and hope anew. But I . . . to hope that from a line like ours No horrid prodigy like this would spring, Were just as though I hoped that from these old Confederates against the sovereign day, 20 Children of older and yet older sires, Whose living coral berries dropped, as now On me, on many a baron's surcoat once, On many a beauty's wimple — would proceed No poison-tree, to thrust, from hell its root, Hither and thither its strange snaky arms. Why came I here? What must I do? [A bell strikes.] A bell?

Midnight! and 't is at midnight . . . Ah, I catch - Woods, river, plains, I catch your meaning now, And I obey you! Hist! This tree will serve. [He retires behind one of the trees. After a pause,

enter Mertoun cloaked as before.

Mertoun. Not time! Beat out thy last voluptuous beat

Of hope and fear, my heart! I thought the clock I' the chapel struck as I was pushing through The ferns. And so I shall no more see rise My love-star! Oh, no matter for the past! So much the more delicious task to watch Mildred revive: to pluck out, thorn by thorn, All traces of the rough forbidden path My rash love lured her to! Each day must see Some fear of hers effaced, some hope renewed: 40 Then there will be surprises, unforeseen Delights in store. I'll not regret the past. [The light is placed above in the purple pane.

And see, my signal rises, Mildred's star!

I never saw it lovelier than now

It rises for the last time. If it sets,

'T is that the re-assuring sun may dawn. [As he prepares to ascend the last tree of the avenue, Tresham arrests his arm. Unhand me — peasant, by your grasp! Here's gold. 'T was a mad freak of mine. I said I'd pluck A branch from the white-blossomed shrub beneath The casement there. Take this, and hold your peace. Tresham. Into the moonlight yonder, come with me! Out of the shadow! I am armed, fool! Mertoun. Yes. Tresham. Or no? You 'll come into the light, or no? My hand is on your throat — refuse! — That voice! Mertoun. Where have I heard . . . no — that was mild and slow. ll come with you. [They advance. Tresham. You're armed: that's well. Declare I'll come with you. Your name: who are you? (Tresham! — she is lost!) Mertoun. Tresham. Oh, silent? Do you know, you bear yourself Exactly as, in curious dreams I 've had How felons, this wild earth is full of, look 60 When they 're detected, still your kind has looked! The brave holds an assured countenance. The thief is voluble and plausible, But silently the slave of lust has crouched When I have fancied it before a man. Your name! Mertoun. I do conjure Lord Tresham — ay,

Kissing his foot, if so I might prevail — That he for his own sake forbear to ask

My name! As heaven 's above, his future weal Or woe depends upon my silence! Vain! 70 I read your white inexorable face. Know me, Lord Tresham!

[After a pause.] Draw now!

Mertoun. Hear me

But speak first!

Tresham. Not one least word on your life!

Be sure that I will strangle in your throat

The least word that informs me how you live
And yet seem what you seem! No doubt 't was you

Taught Mildred still to keep that face and sin.

We should join hands in frantic sympathy

If you once taught me the unteachable,

Explain how you can live so, and so lie.

With God's help I retain, despite my sense,

The old belief — a life like yours is still

Impossible. Now draw!

Mertoun.

Not for my sake,

Mertoun. Not for my sake, Do I entreat a hearing — for your sake,

And most, for her sake!

Tresham. Ha ha, what should I
Know of your ways? A miscreant like yourself,
How must one rouse his ire? A blow?—that 's pride
No doubt, to him! One spurns him, does one not?
Or sets the foot upon his mouth, or spits
Into his face! Come! Which, or all of these?

Mertoun. 'Twixt him and me and Mildred,

Heaven be judge!

Can I avoid this? Have your will, my lord!
[He draws and, after a few passes, falls.

Tresham. You are not hurt?

Mertoun. You 'll hear me now!

Tresham.

Mertoun. Ah, Tresham, say I not "you 'll hear me now!"

And what procures a man the right to speak
In his defence before his fellow man,
But — I suppose — the thought that presently
He may have leave to speak before his God
His whole defence?

Tresham. Not hurt? It cannot be!

You made no effort to resist me. Where
Did my sword reach you? Why not have returned
My thrusts? Hurt where?

Mertoun. My lord —

Tresham. How young he is!

Mertoun. Lord Tresham, I am very young, and
yet

I have entangled other lives with mine.

Do let me speak, and do believe my speech!

That when I die before you presently,—

Tresham. Can you stay here till I return with help? Mertoun. Oh, stay by me! When I was less than

boy

I did you grievous wrong and knew it not — Upon my honor, knew it not! Once known, 110 I could not find what seemed a better way To right you than I took: my life — you feel How less than nothing were the giving you The life you 've taken! But I thought my way The better — only for your sake and hers: And as you have decided otherwise, Would I had an infinity of lives To offer you! Now say — instruct me — think! Can you, from the brief minutes I have left, Eke out my reparation? Oh think — think! 120 For I must wring a partial — dare I say,

Forgiveness from you, ere I die?

Tresham. I do

Forgive you.

Mertoun. Wait and ponder that great word!

Because, if you forgive me, I shall hope

To speak to you of — Mildred!

Tresham. Mertoun, haste

And anger have undone us. 'T is not you Should tell me for a novelty you're young,

Thoughtless, unable to recall the past. Be but your pardon ample as my own!

Mertoun. Ah, Tresham, that a sword-stroke and a drop

Of blood or two, should bring all this about!
Why, 't was my very fear of you, my love
Of you — (what passion like a boy's for one

Like you?) — that ruined me! I dreamed of you —

You, all accomplished, courted everywhere,

The scholar and the gentleman. I burned

To knit myself to you: but I was young, And your surpassing reputation kept me

So far aloof! Oh, wherefore all that love?

With less of love, my glorious yesterday

Of praise and gentlest words and kindest looks,

Had taken place perchance six months ago.

Even now, how happy we had been! And yet

I know the thought of this escaped you, Tresham!

Let me look up into your face; I feel

'T is changed above me: yet my eyes are glazed.

Where? where?

[As he endeavors to raise himself, his eye catches the lamp.

Ah, Mildred! What will Mildred do?

Tresham, her life is bound up in the life

That's bleeding fast away! I'll live - must live,

There, if you 'll only turn me I shall live And save her! Tresham — oh, had you but heard! Had you but heard! What right was yours to set The thoughtless foot upon her life and mine, And then say, as we perish, "Had I thought, All had gone otherwise"? We 've sinned and die: Never you sin, Lord Tresham! for you 'll die, And God will judge you.

Yes, be satisfied! Tresham.

That process is begun.

And she sits there Mertoun. Waiting for me! Now, say you this to her — You, not another — say, I saw him die

As he breathed this, "I love her" — you don't know What those three small words mean! Say, loving her Lowers me down the bloody slope to death With memories . . . I speak to her, not you, Who had no pity, will have no remorse, Perchance intend her . . . Die along with me, Dear Mildred! 't is so easy, and you 'll 'scape So much unkindness! Can I lie at rest, With rude speech spoken to you, ruder deeds Done to you? — heartless men shall have my heart, And I tied down with grave-clothes and the worm, Aware, perhaps, of every blow — oh God! Upon those lips — yet of no power to tear The felon stripe by stripe! Die, Mildred! Leave Their honorable world to them! For God We're good enough, though the world casts us out. [A whistle is heard.

Tresham. Ho. Gerard!

Enter Gerard, Austin and Guendolen, with lights.

No one speak! You see what 's done. I cannot bear another voice.

Mertoun. There 's light — Light all about me, and I move to it.

Tresham, did I not tell you — did you not
Just promise to deliver words of mine
To Mildred?

Tresham. I will bear those words to her.

Mertoun. Now?

Tresham. Now. Lift you the body, and leave me The head.

[As they have half raised Mertoun, he turns suddenly.

Mertoun. I knew they turned me: turn me not from her!

There! stay you! there! [Dies. Guendolen [after a pause]. Austin, remain you here

With Thorold until Gerard comes with help: Then lead him to his chamber. I must go To Mildred.

You utter. Did you hear him bid me give

His message? Did you hear my promise? I, 190 And only I, see Mildred.

Guendolen. She will die.

Tresham. Oh no, she will not die! I dare not hope

She 'll die. What ground have you to think she 'll die?

Why, Austin 's with you!

Austin.

Had we but arrived

Before you fought!

Tresham. There was no fight at all.

He let me slaughter him — the boy! I'll trust

The body there to you and Gerard — thus!

Now bear him on before me.

Whither bear him? Austin. Tresham. Oh, to my chamber! When we meet there next, We shall be friends. They bear out the body of Mertoun. Will she die, Guendolen? 200 Where are you taking me? Guendolen. Tresham. He fell just here. Now answer me. Shall you in your whole life - You who have naught to do with Mertoun's fate. Now you have seen his breast upon the turf, Shall you e'er walk this way if you can help? When you and Austin wander arm-in-arm Through our ancestral grounds, will not a shade Be ever on the meadow and the waste-Another kind of shade than when the night Shuts the woodside with all its whispers up? 910 But will you ever so forget his breast As carelessly to cross this bloody turf Under the black yew avenue? That 's well! You turn your head: and I then? -Guendolen. What is done Is done. My care is for the living. Thorold, Bear up against this burden: more remains To set the neck to! Tresham. Dear and ancient trees My fathers planted, and I loved so well! What have I done that, like some fabled crime Of yore, lets loose a Fury leading thus 220 Her miserable dance amidst you all? Oh, never more for me shall winds intone With all your tops a vast antiphony, Demanding and responding in God's praise!

Hers ye are now, not mine! Farewell - farewell!

Scene II — Mildred's chamber.

MILDRED alone.

He comes not! I have heard of those who seemed Resourceless in prosperity, — you thought Sorrow might slay them when she listed; yet Did they so gather up their diffused strength At her first menace, that they bade her strike, And stood and laughed her subtlest skill to scorn. Oh, 't is not so with me! The first woe fell, And the rest fall upon it, not on me: Else should I bear that Henry comes not? — fails Just this first night out of so many nights? 10 Loving is done with. Were he sitting now, As so few hours since, on that seat, we'd love No more — contrive no thousand happy ways To hide love from the loveless, any more. I think I might have urged some little point In my defence, to Thorold; he was breathless For the least hint of a defence: but no, The first shame over, all that would might fall. No Henry! Yet I merely sit and think 19 The morn's deed o'er and o'er. I must have crept Out of myself. A Mildred that has lost Her lover — oh, I dare not look upon Such woe! I crouch away from it! 'T is she, Mildred, will break her heart, not I! The world Forsakes me: only Henry 's left me — left? When I have lost him, for he does not come, And I sit stupidly . . . Oh Heaven, break up This worse than anguish, this mad apathy, By any means or any messenger! Tresham [without]. Mildred! 29

Mildred. Come in! Heaven hears me!

[Enter Tresham.] You? alone?
Oh, no more cursing!
Tresham. Mildred, I must sit.
There — you sit!
Mildred. Say it, Thorold — do not look
The curse! deliver all you come to say!
What must become of me? Oh, speak that
thought
Which makes your brow and cheeks so pale!
Tresham. My thought?
Mildred. All of it!
Tresham. How we waded — years ago —
After those water-lilies, till the plash,
I know not how, surprised us; and you dared
Neither advance nor turn back: so, we stood
Laughing and crying until Gerard came — 40
Once safe upon the turf, the loudest too,
For once more reaching the relinquished prize!
How idle thoughts are, some men's, dying men's!
Mildred, —
Mildred. You call me kindlier by my name
Than even yesterday: what is in that?
Tresham. It weighs so much upon my mind that I
This morning took an office not my own!
I might of course, I must be glad or gricved,
Content or not, at every little thing
That touches you. I may with a wrung heart 50
Even reprove you, Mildred; I did more:
Will you forgive me?
Mildred. Thorold? do you mock?
Or no and yet you bid me say that word!
Tresham. Forgive me, Mildred!—are you silent,
are you shell,

Sweet?

Mildred [starting up]. Why does not Henry
Mertoun come to-night?

Are you, too, silent?

[Dashing his mantle aside, and pointing to his

scabbard, which is empty.

Ah, this speaks for you! You've murdered Henry Mertoun! Now proceed! What is it I must pardon? This and all?

Well, I do pardon you — I think I do.

Thorold, how very wretched you must be! Tresham. He bade me tell you . . . 60

Mildred. What I do forbid

Your utterance of! So much that you may tell And will not — how you murdered him . . . but, not

You 'll tell me that he loved me, never more Than bleeding out his life there: must I say "Indeed," to that? Enough! I pardon you.

Tresham. You cannot, Mildred! for the harsh

words, yes:

Of this last deed Another's judge: whose doom I wait in doubt, despondency and fear.

Mildred. Oh, true! There's naught for me to pardon! True! 70

You loose my soul of all its cares at once. Death makes me sure of him forever! You Tell me his last words? He shall tell me them, And take my answer — not in words, but reading Himself the heart I had to read him late, Which death . .

Tresham. Death? You are dying too? Well said

Of Guendolen! I dared not hope you'd die: But she was sure of it.

Tell Guendolen Mildred.

I loved her, and tell Austin . . .

Tresham. Him you loved: And me? Mildred. Ah, Thorold! Was 't not rashly done To guench that blood, on fire with youth and hope 81 And love of me — whom you loved too, and yet Suffered to sit here waiting his approach While you were slaving him? Oh, doubtlessly You let him speak his poor confused boy's-speech — Do his poor utmost to disarm your wrath And respite me! — you let him try to give The story of our love and ignorance, And the brief madness and the long despair — You let him plead all this, because your code 90 Of honor bids you hear before you strike: But at the end, as he looked up for life Into your eyes — you struck him down! No! No! Tresham.

Had I but heard him — had I let him speak
Half the truth — less — had I looked long on him
I had desisted! Why, as he lay there,
The moon on his flushed cheek, I gathered all
The story ere he told it: I saw through
The troubled surface of his crime and yours
A depth of purity immovable,

Had I but glanced, where all seemed turbidest
Had gleamed some inlet to the calm beneath;
I would not glance: my punishment 's at hand.
There, Mildred, is the truth! and you — say on —
You curse me?

Mildred. As I dare approach that Heaven
Which has not bade a living thing despair,
Which needs no code to keep its grace from stain,
But bids the vilest worm that turns on it
Desist and be forgiven, — I — forgive not,
But bless you, Thorold, from my soul of souls! 110

[Falls on his neck.

There! Do not think too much upon the past! The cloud that 's broke was all the same a cloud While it stood up between my friend and you; You hurt him 'neath its shadow: but is that So past retrieve? I have his heart, you know; I may dispose of it: I give it you! It loves you as mine loves! Confirm me, Henry!

Tresham. I wish thee joy, Beloved! I am glad

In thy full gladness!

Guendolen [without]. Mildred! Tresham!

[Entering with Austin.] Thorold,

I could desist no longer. Ah, she swoons! That 's well.

Tresham. Oh, better far than that! Guendolen. She 's dead!

Let me unlock her arms!

Tresham. She threw them thus

About my neck, and blessed me, and then died:

You'll let them stay now, Guendolen!

Austin.

And look to him! What ails you, Thorold? Guendolen. White

As she, and whiter! Austin! quick — this side! Austin. A froth is oozing through his clenched teeth:

Both lips, where they 're not bitten through, are black:

Speak, dearcst Thorold!

Tresham. Something does weigh down My neck beside her weight: thanks: I should fall 130 But for you, Austin, I believe! — there, there, 'T will pass away soon! — ah, — I had forgotten:

I am dying.

Guendolen. Thorold — Thorold — why was this?

Tresham. I said, just as I drank the poison off,
The earth would be no longer earth to me,
The life out of all life was gone from me.
There are blind ways provided, the foredone
Heart-weary player in this pageant-world
Drops out by, letting the main masque defile
By the conspicuous portal: I am through—

140
Just through!

Guendolen. Don't leave him, Austin! Death is

close.

Tresham. Already Mildred's face is peacefuller.

I see you, Austin — feel you: here 's my hand,
Put yours in it — you, Guendolen, yours too!
You're lord and lady now — you're Treshams;
name

And fame are yours: you hold our 'scutcheon up.
Austin, no blot on it! You see how blood
Must wash one blot away: the first blot came
And the first blood came. To the vain world's eye
All 's gules again: no care to the vain world,

From whence the red was drawn!

Austin. No blot shall come!

Tresham. I said that: yet it did come. Should

it come, Vengeance is God's, not man's. Remember me!

Guendolen [letting fall the pulseless arm]. Ah, Thorold, we can but — remember you!

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

A PLAY

1844

NO ONE LOVES AND HONORS BARRY CORNWALL MORE THAN DOES ROBERT BROWNING;

WHO, HAVING NOTHING BETTER THAN THIS PLAY TO GIVE HIM IN PROOF OF IT, MUST SAY SO.

London: 1844

Ivy and violet, what do ye here With blossom and shoot in the warm spring-weather, Hiding the arms of Monchenci and Vere?

— Hanmer.

PERSONS

Colombe of Ravestein, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves. Sabyne, Adolf, her attendants.

Guibert, Gaucelme, Maufroy, Clugnet, courtiers.

Valence, advocate of Cleves.

PRINCE BERTHOLD, claimant of the Duchy. MELCHOIR, his confident.

Place — The Palace at Juliers.

Тіме, 16-

ACT I

MORNING

Scene — A corridor leading to the Audience-chamber.

Gaucelme, Clugnet, Maufroy and other Courtiers, round Guibert, who is silently reading a paper: as he drops it at the end—

Guibert. That this should be her birthday; and the day

We all invested her, twelve months ago,

As the late Duke's true heiress and our liege;

And that this also must become the day . . .

Oh, miserable lady!

1st Courtier. Ay, indeed 2nd Courtier. Well, Guibert? Ay, indeed?

3rd Courtier. But your news, my friend, your news!

The sooner, friend, one learns Prince Berthold's pleasure.

The better for us all: how writes the Prince? Give me! I'll read it for the common good.

Guibert. In time, sir, — but till time comes, pardon me! 10

Our old Duke just disclosed his child's retreat,

Declared her true succession to his rule.

And died: this birthday was the day, last year,

Wc convoyed her from Castle Ravestein —

That sleeps out trustfully its extreme age

On the Meuse' quiet bank, where she lived queen

Over the water-buds, — to Juliers' court With joy and bustle. Here again we stand;

Sir Guacelme's buckle's constant to his cap: To-day's much such another sunny day!

Gaucelme. Come, Guibert, this outgrows a jest,

I think! You're hardly such a novice as to need

The lesson, you pretend.

Guibert. What lesson, sir?

That everybody, if he 'd thrive at court, Should, first and last of all, look to himself?

Why, no: and therefore with your good example, (— Ho, Master Adolf!) — to myself I'll look.

Enter Adolf.

Guibert. The Prince's letter; why, of all men else, Comes it to me?

Adolf. By virtue of your place,
Sir Guibert! 'T was the Prince's express charge, 30
His envoy told us, that the missive there
Should only reach our lady by the hand
Of whosoever held your place.

Guibert. Enough!

[Adolf retires.

Then, gentles, who 'll accept a certain poor Indifferently honorable place,

My friends, I make no doubt, have gnashed their

At leisure minutes these half-dozen years,
To find me never in the mood to quit?
Who asks may have it, with my blessing, and—
This to present our lady. Who 'll accept?

You,—you,—you? There it lies, and may, for me!

Maufroy [a youth, picking up the paper, reads aloud]. "Prince Berthold, proved by titles following

Undoubted Lord of Juliers, comes this day To claim his own, with license from the Pope, The Emperor, the Kings of Spain and France"

Gaucelme. Sufficient "titles following," I judge! Don't read another! Well, — "to claim his own"? Maufroy. "— And take possession of the Duchy

held

Since twelve months, to the true heir's prejudice, By"... Colombe, Juliers' mistress, so she thinks, And Ravestein's mere lady, as we find.

Who wants the place and paper? Guibert's right.

I hope to climb a little in the world, —
I'd push my fortunes, — but, no more than he,
Could tell her on this happy day of days,
That, save the nosegay in her hand, perhaps,
There's nothing left to call her own. Sir Clugnet,
You famish for promotion; what say you?

Clugnet [an old man]. To give this letter were a

60

sort, I take it,

Of service: services ask recompense: What kind of corner may be Ravestein?

Guibert. The castle? Oh, you'd share her fortunes? Good!

Three walls stand upright, full as good as four,

With no such bad remainder of a roof.

Clugnet. Oh, — but the town?

Guibert. Five houses, fifteen huts;

A church whereto was once a spire, 't is judged;

And half a dyke, except in time of thaw. Cluquet. Still, there's some revenue?

Guibert. Else Heaven forfend!

You hang a beacon out, should fogs increase; So, when the Autumn floats of pine-wood steer 70 Safe 'mid the white confusion, thanks to you, Their grateful raftsman flings a guilder in;

— That 's if he mean to pass your way next time.

Clugnet. If not?

Guibert. Hang guilders, then! He blesses you. Clugnet. What man do you suppose me? Keep

your paper!

And, let me say, it shows no handsome spirit To dally with misfortune: keep your place!

Gaucelme. Some one must tell her.

Guibert. Some one may: you may! Gaucelme. Sir Guibert, 't is no trifle turns me

80

Of court-hypocrisy at years like mine, But this goes near it. Where 's there news at all? Who 'll have the face, for instance, to affirm He never heard, e'en while we crowned the girl. That Juliers' tenure was by Salic law; That one, confessed her father's cousin's child. And, she away, indisputable heir, Against our choice protesting and the Duke's, Claimed Juliers? — nor, as he preferred his claim, That first this, then another potentate, Inclined to its allowance? — I or you, 90 Or any one except the lady's self? Oh, it had been the direct cruelty To break the business to her! Things might change: At all events, we'd see next masque at end, Next mummery over first: and so the edge Was taken off sharp tidings as they came, Till here 's the Prince upon us, and there 's she — Wreathing her hair, a song between her lips, With just the faintest notion possible That some such claimant earns a livelihood 100 About the world, by feigning grievances Few pay the story of, but grudge its price, And fewer listen to, a second time. Your method proves a failure; now try mine! And, since this must be carried . . Guibert [snatching the paper from him]. By your leave! Your zeal transports you! 'T will not serve the Prince

So much as you expect, this course you'd take. If she leaves quietly her palace, — well; But if she died upon its threshold, — no: He'd have the trouble of removing her. 110 Come, gentles, we 're all — what the devil knows!

You, Gaucelme, won't lose character, beside:
You broke your father's heart superiorly
To gather his succession — never blush!
You're from my province, and, be comforted,
They tell of it with wonder to this day.
You can afford to let your talent sleep.
We'll take the very worst supposed, as true:
There, the old Duke knew, when he hid his child
Among the river-flowers at Ravestein,
With whom the right lay! Call the Prince our Duke!
There, she's no Duchess, she's no anything
More than a young maid with the bluest eyes:
And now, sirs, we'll not break this young maid's
heart

Coolly as Gaucelme could and would! No haste! His talent 's full-blown, ours but in the bud: We 'll not advance to his perfection yet — Will we, Sir Maufroy? See, I 've ruined Maufroy Forever as a courtier!

Gaucelme. Here 's a coil!

And, count us, will you? Count its residue,
This boasted convoy, this day last year's crowd!
A birthday, too, a gratulation day!
L'm dumb; bid that bear silver.

I'm dumb: bid that keep silence!

Maufroy and others. Eli, Sir Guibert? He's right: that does say something: that's bare truth.

Ten — twelve, I make: a perilous dropping off!

Guibert. Pooh — is it audience hour? The vestibule

Swarms too, I wager, with the common sort That want our privilege of entry here.

Gaucelme. Adolf! [Re-enter Adolf.] Who's outside?

Guibert.

Oh, your looks suffice!

Nobody waiting?

Maufroy [looking through the door-folds]. Scarce our number!

Nothing to beg for, to complain about?

It can't be! Ill news spreads, but not so fast

As thus to frighten all the world!

Gaucelme. The world
Lives out of doors, sir — not with you and me
By presence-chamber porches, state-room stairs,
Wherever warmth 's perpetual: outside 's free
To every wind from every compass-point,
And who may get nipped needs be weather-wise.
The Prince comes and the lady's People go;
The snow-goose settles down, the swallows flee
Why should they wait for winter-time? 'T is instinct.
Don't you feel somewhat chilly?

Guibert. That 's their craft?

And last year's crowders-round and criers-forth
That strewed the garlands, overarched the roads,
Lighted the bonfires, sang the loyal songs!
Well 't is my comfort, you could never call me
The People's Friend! The People keep their word—
I keep my place: don't doubt I 'll entertain
The People when the Prince comes, and the People

Are talked of! Then, their speeches—no one tongue Found respite, not a pen had holiday

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— For they wrote, too, as well as spoke, these knaves!
Now see: we tax and tithe them, pill and poll,

They wince and fret enough, but pay they must

— We manage that, — so, pay with a good grace

They might as well, it costs so little more.
But when we 've done with taxes, meet folk next

Outside the toll-booth and the rating-place, In public — there they have us if they will,

We're at their mercy after that, you see! 170 For one tax not ten devils could extort — Over and above necessity, a grace; This prompt disbosoming of love, to wit — Their vine-leaf wrappage of our tribute penny, And crowding attestation, all works well. Yet this precisely do they thrust on us! These cappings quick, these crook-and-cringings low, Hand to the heart, and forehead to the knee, With grin that shuts the eyes and opes the mouth — So tender they their love; and, tender made, Go home to curse us, the first doit we ask. As if their souls were any longer theirs! As if they had not given ample warrant To who should clap a collar on their neck, Rings in their nose, a goad to either flank, And take them for the brute they boast themselves! Stay — there 's a bustle at the outer door -And somebody entreating . . . that's my name! Adolf, — I heard my name! Adolf. 'T was probably The suitor. Guibert. Oh, there is one? Adolf. With a suit 190 He 'd fain enforce in person.

Guibert. The good heart

—And the great fool! Just ope the mid-door's fold! Is that a lappet of his cloak, I see?

Adolf. If it bear plenteous sign of travel . . . ay,

The very cloak my comrades tore!

Guibert. Why tore?

Adolf. He seeks the Duchess' presence in that trim:

Since daybreak, was he posted hereabouts Lest he should miss the moment. Guibert. Where 's he now?

Adolf. Gone for a minute possibly, not more:

They have ado enough to thrust him back.

Guibert. Ay — but my name, I caught?

Adolf. Oh, sir — he said

— What was it? — You had known him formerly, And, he believed, would help him did you guess

He waited now; you promised him as much:

The old plea! 'Faith, he's back, — renews the charge!

[Speaking at the door.] So long as the man parleys,

peace outside —

Nor be too ready with your halberts, there!

Gaucelme. My horse bespattered, as he blocked the path

A thin sour man, not unlike somebody.

Adolf. He holds a paper in his breast, whereon 210

He glances when his cheeks flush and his brow At each repulse —

Gaucelme. I noticed he'd a brow.

Adolf. So glancing, he grows calmer, leans awhile

Over the balustrade, adjusts his dress,

And presently turns round, quiet again,
With some new pretext for admittance. — Back!

[To Guibert.] — Sir, he has seen you! Now cross halberts! Ha—

Pascal is prostrate — there lies Fabian too!

No passage! Whither would the madman press? 219 Close the doors quick on me!

Guibert. Too late! He 's here.

Enter, hastily and with discomposed dress, Valence.

Valence. Sir Guibert, will you help me? — me, that come

Charged by your townsmen, all who starve at Cleves.

To represent their heights and depths of woe Before our Duchess and obtain relief!
Such errands barricade such doors, it seems:
But not a common hindrance drives me back
On all the sad yet hopeful faces, lit
With hope for the first time, which sent me forth.
Cleves, speak for me! Cleves' men and women,

speak!

Who followed me — your strongest — many a mile 230 That I might go the fresher from their ranks, — Who sit — your weakest — by the city gates, To take me fuller of what news I bring As I return — for I must needs return! -Can I? 'Twere hard, no listener for their wrongs, To turn them back upon the old despair — Harder, Sir Guibert, than imploring thus — So, I do — any way you please — implore! If you . . . but how should you remember Cleves? Yet they of Cleves remember you so well! 240 Ay, comment on each trait of you they keep, Your words and deeds caught up at second hand, — Proud, I believe, at bottom of their hearts, O' the very levity and recklessness Which only prove that you forget their wrongs. Cleves, the grand town, whose men and women starve.

Is Cleves forgotten? Then, remember me!
You promised me that you would help me once,
For other purpose: will you keep your word?
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Guibert. And who may you be, friend?

Valence. Valence of Cleves.

Guibert. Valence of . . . not the advocate of Cleves.

I owed my whole estate to, three years back? Ay, well may you keep silence! Why, my lords,

You've heard, I'm sure, how, Pentecost three years. I was so nearly ousted of my land

By some knave's-pretext — (eh? when you refused me

Your ugly daughter, Clugnet!) — and you've heard

How I recovered it by miracle

— (When I refused her!) Here 's the very friend, — Valence of Cleves, all parties have to thank!

Nay, Valence, this procedure 's vile in you!

I'm no more grateful than a courtier should,

But politic am I — I bear a brain.

Can cast about a little, might require

Your services a second time. I tried

To tempt you with advancement here to court
— "No!" — well, for curiosity at least

To view our life here - "No!" - our Duchess, then. —

A pretty woman's worth some pains to see,

Nor is she spoiled, I take it, if a crown

Complete the forehead pale and tresses pure . . .

Valence. Our city trusted me its miseries.

And I am come.

Guibert. So much for taste! But "come,"—

So may you be, for anything I know,

To beg the Pope's cross, or Sir Clugnet's daughter,

And with an equal chance you get all three.

If it was ever worth your while to come,

Was not the proper way worth finding too?

Valence. Straight to the palace-portal, sir, I came · 279

Guibert. — And said? —

Valence. — That I had brought the miseries Of a whole city to relieve.

Guibert. — Which saying Won your admittance? You saw me, indeed, And here, no doubt, you stand: as certainly, My intervention, I shall not dispute, Procures you audience; which, if I procure, — That paper 's closely written — by Saint Paul, Here flock the Wrongs, follow the Remedies, Chapter and verse, One, Two, A, B and C! Perhaps you 'd enter, make a reverence,

And launch these "miseries" from first to last? 290 Valence. How should they let me pause or turn

aside?

Gaucelme [to Valence]. My worthy sir, one question! You 've come straight

From Cleves, you tell us: heard you any talk

At Cleves about our lady?

Valence. Much.

Valence. Her wish was to redress all wrongs she knew.

Gaucelme. That, you believed?

Valence. You see me, sir!

Gaucelme. — Nor stopped

Upon the road from Cleves to Juliers here, For any — rumors you might find afloat?

Valence. I had my townsmen's wrongs to busy me.

Gaucelme. This is the lady's birthday, do you know?

— Her day of pleasure?

Valence. — That the great, I know, For pleasure born, should still be on the watch To exclude pleasure when a duty offers: Even as, for duty born, the lowly too May ever snatch a pleasure if in reach: Both will have plenty of their birthright, sir!

Gaucelme [aside to Guibert]. Sir Guibert, here 's your man! No scruples now —

You 'll never find his like! Time presses hard.
I've seen your drift and Adolf's too, this while,
But you can't keep the hour of audience back
Much longer, and at noon the Prince arrives.
[Pointing to Valence.] Entrust him with it — fool

no chance away!

Guibert. Him?

Gaucèlme. — With the missive! What's the man to her?

Guibert. No bad thought! Yet, 't is yours, who

ever played

The tempting serpent: else 't were no bad thought! I should — and do — mistrust it for your sake, Or else . . .

Enter an Official who communicates with Adolf.

Adolf. The Duchess will receive the court. Guibert. Give us a moment, Adolf! Valence, friend,

I'll help you. We of the service, you're to mark.

Have special entry, while the herd . . . the folk 320 Outside, get access through our help alone;

— Well, it is so, was so, and I suppose So ever will be: your natural lot is, therefore,

To wait your turn and opportunity,

And probably miss both. Now, I engage To set you, here and in a minute's space, Before the lady, with full leave to plead Chapter and verse, and A, and B, and C, To heart's content.

Valence. I grieve that I must ask, —

This being, yourself admit, the custom here, — 330 To what the price of such a favor mounts?

Guibert. Just so! You 're not without a courtier's

tact.

Little at court, as your quick instinct prompts, Do such as we without a recompense.

Valence. Yours is? —

Guibert. A trifle: here 's a document

'T is some one's duty to present her Grace —

I say, not mine—these say, not theirs—such points

Have weight at court. Will you relieve us all And take it? Just say, "I am bidden lay

This paper at the Duchess' feet!"

Valence. No more? 340

I thank you, sir!

Adolf. Her Grace receives the court.

Guibert [aside]. Now, sursum corda, quoth the

mass-priest! Do —

Whoever's my kind saint, do let alone
These pushings to and fro, and pullings back;
Peaceably let me hang o' the devil's arm
The downward path, if you can't pluck me off
Completely! Let me live quite his, or yours!

The Courtiers begin to range themselves, and

move toward the door.

After me, Valence! So, our famous Cleves
Lacks bread? Yet don't we gallants buy their lace?
And dear enough — it beggars me, I know,
To keep my very gloves fringed properly.
This, Valence, is our Great State Hall you cross;
Yon gray urn's veritable marcasite,
The Pope's gift: and those salvers testify

The Emperor. Presently you'll set your foot... But you don't speak, friend Valence!

Valence.

Gaucelme [aside to Guibert]. Guibert—it were no such ungraceful thing

If you and I, at first, seemed horror-struck With the bad news. Look here, what you shall do. Suppose you, first, clap hands to sword and cry 360 "Yield strangers our allegiance? First I'll perish Beside your Grace!"— and so give me the cue To . . .

Guibert. — Clap your hand to note-book and jot down

That to regale the Prince with? I conceive.

[To Valence.] Do, Valence, speak, or I shall half
suspect

You're plotting to supplant us, me the first, I' the lady's favor! Is 't the grand harangue You mean to make, that thus engrosses you?

— Which of her virtues you'll apostrophize?

Or is 't the fashion you aspire to start,

Of that close-curled, not unbecoming hair?

Or what else ponder you?

Valence.

My townsmen's wrongs.

ACT II

NOON

Scene — The Presence-chamber.

The Duchess and Sabyne.

The Duchess. Announce that I am ready for the court!

Sabyne. 'T is scarcely audience-hour, I think; your Grace

May best consult your own relief, no doubt,

And shun the crowd: but few can have arrived.

The Duchess. Let those not yet arrived, then,

keep away!

'T was me, this day last year at Ravestein, You hurried. It has been full time, beside, This half-hour. Do you hesitate?

Sabyne. Forgive me! The Duchess. Stay, Sabyne; let me hasten to

10

20

make sure

Of one true thanker: here with you begins My audience, claim you first its privilege! It is my birth's event they celebrate:

You need not wish me more such happy days, But — ask some favor! Have you none to ask?

Has Adolf none, then? this was far from least

Of much I waited for impatiently,

Assure yourself! It seemed so natural Your gift, beside this bunch of river-bells, Should be the power and leave of doing good To you, and greater pleasure to myself. You ask my leave to-day to marry Adolf?

The rest is my concern.

Sabyne. Your Grace is ever Our lady of dear Ravestein, — but, for Adolf . . .

The Duchess. "But"? You have not, sure,

changed in your regard

And purpose towards him?

Sabyne. We change? The Duchess. Well then? Well?

Sabyne. How could we two be happy, and, most

like,

Leave Juliers, when — when . . . but 't is audiencetime!

The Duchess. "When, if you left me, I were left indeed!"

Would you subjoin that? — Bid the court approach! - Why should we play thus with each other, Sabyne? Do I not know, if courtiers prove remiss, If friends detain me, and get blame for it. There is a cause? Of last year's fervid throng Scarce one half comes now.

Sabyne [aside]. One half? No, alas!

The Duchess. So can the mere suspicion of a cloud Over my fortunes, strike each loyal heart. They've heard of this Prince Berthold; and, for sooth, Some foolish arrogant pretence he makes, May grow more foolish and more arrogant,

They please to apprehend! I thank their love.

Admit them!

Sabyne [aside]. How much has she really learned? The Duchess. Surely, whoever 's absent, Tristan waits?

— Or at least Romuald, whom my father raised From nothing — come, he 's faithful to me, come! (Sabyne, I should but be the prouder — yes, The fitter to comport myself aright)

Not Romauld? Xavier — what said he to that?

For Xavier hates a parasite, I know!

[Sabyne goes out.

The Duchess. Well, sunshine's everywhere, and summer too.

Next year 't is the old place again, perhaps 50 The water-breeze again, the birds again. — It cannot be! It is too late to be!

What part had I, or choice in all of it? Hither they brought me; I had not to think Nor care, concern myself with doing good Or ill, my task was just — to live, — to live,

And, answering ends there was no need explain,

To render Juliers happy — so they said.

All could not have been falsehood: some was love, And wonder and obedience. I did all 60 They looked for: why then cease to do it now? Yet this is to be calmly set aside, And — ere next birthday's dawn, for aught I know, Things change, a claimant may arrive, and I . . . It cannot nor it shall not be! His right? Well then, he has the right, and I have not, — But who bade all of you surround my life And close its growth up with your ducal crown Which, plucked off rudely, leaves me perishing? 69 I could have been like one of you, — loved, hoped, Feared, lived and died like one of you — but you Would take that life away and give me this, And I will keep this! I will face you! Come!

Enter the Courtiers and VALENCE.

The Courtiers. Many such happy mornings to your Grace!

The Duchess [aside, as they pay their devoir]. The same words, the same faces,—the same love! I have been overfearful. These are few; But these, at least, stand firmly: these are mine. As many come as may; and if no more, 'T is that these few suffice—they do suffice! 79 What succor may not next year bring me? Plainly, I feared too soon. [To the Courtiers.] I thank you, sirs: all thanks!

Valence [aside, as the Duchess passes from one group to another, conversing]. 'T is she—the vision this day last year brought,

When, for a golden moment at our Cleves, She tarried in her progress hither. Cleves Chose me to speak its welcome, and I spoke Not that she could have noted the recluse
Ungainly, old before his time — who gazed.
Well, Heaven's gifts are not wasted, and that gaze
Kept, and shall keep me to the end, her own!
She was above it — but so would not sink 90
My gaze to earth! The People caught it, hers —
Thenceforward, mine; but thus entirely mine,
Who shall affirm, had she not raised my soul
Ere she retired and left me — them? She turns —
There 's all her wondrous face at once! The ground
Reels and . . . [suddenly occupying himself with his paper].

These wrongs of theirs I have to plead!

The Duchess [to the Courtiers]. Nay, compliment

enough! and kindness' self

Should pause before it wish me more such years. 'T was fortunate that thus, ere youth escaped, I tasted life's pure pleasure — one such, pure, 100 Is worth a thousand, mixed — and youth's for pleasure:

Mine is received; lct my age pay for it.

Gaucelme. So, pay, and pleasure paid for, thinks your Grace,

your Grace, Should never go together?

Guibert. How, Sir Gaucelme?

Hurry one's feast down unenjoyingly

At the snatched breathing-intervals of work?
As good you saved it till the dull day's-end
When, stiff and sleepy, appetite is gone.

Eat first, then work upon the strength of food!

The Duchess. True: you enable me to risk my future,

By giving me a past beyond recall.

I lived, a girl, one happy leisure year:
Let me endeavor to be the Duchess now!

And so, — what news, Sir Guibert, spoke you of?

[As they advance a little, and Guibert speaks —

— That gentleman?

Valence [aside]. I feel her eyes on me.

Guibert [to Valence]. The Duchess, sir, inclines to hear your suit.

Advance! He is from Cleves.

Valence [coming forward. Aside]. Their wrongs — their wrongs!

The Duchess. And you, sir, are from Cleves?

120

How fresh in mind,

The hour or two I passed at queenly Cleves!
She entertained me bravely, but the best
Of her good pageant scemed its standers-by
With insuppressive joy on every face!
What says my encient formers have Clean

What says my ancient famous happy Cleves?

Valence. Take the truth, lady — you are made for truth!

So think my friends: nor do they less deserve
The having you to take it, you shall think,
When you know all — nay, when you only know
How, on that day you recollect at Cleves,
When the poor acquiescing multitude
Who thrust themselves with all their woes apart
Into unnoticed corners, that the few,

Their means sufficed to muster trappings for, Might fill the foreground, occupy your sight

With joyous faces fit to bear away

And boast of as a sample of all Cleves

— How, when to daylight these crept out once more, Clutching, unconscious, each his empty rags

Whence the scant coin, which had not half bought

bread,

That morn he shook forth, counted piece by piece, And, well-advisedly, on perfumes spent them 140

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To burn, or flowers to strew, before your path — How, when the golden flood of music and bliss Ebbed, as their moon retreated, and again Left the sharp black-point rocks of misery bare — Then I, their friend, had only to suggest "Saw she the horror as she saw the pomp!" And as one man they cried "He speaks the truth: Show her the horror! Take from our own mouths Our wrongs and show them, she will see them too!" This they cried, lady! I have brought the wrongs.

The Duchess. Wrongs? Cleves has wrongs—

apparent now and thus?

I thank you! In that paper? Give it me!

Valence. (There, Cleves!) In this! (What did

I promise, Cleves?)

Our weavers, clothiers, spinners are reduced Since . . . Oh, I crave your pardon! I forget I buy the privilege of this approach, And promptly would discharge my debt. I lay

This paper humbly at the Duchess' feet.

[Presenting Guibert's paper.

Guibert. Stay! for the present . . .

The Duchess. Stay, sir? I take aught That teaches me their wrongs with greater pride 160 Than this your ducal circlet. Thank you, sir!

[The Duchess reads hastily; then, turning to the Courtiers —

What have I done to you? Your deed or mine Was it, this crowning me? I gave myself No more a title to your homage, no,

Than church-flowers, born this season, wrote the

words

In the saint's-book that sanctified them first. For such a flower, you plucked me; well, you erred— Well, 't was a weed; remove the eye-sore quick!

But should you not remember it has lain
Steeped in the candles' glory, palely shrined,
Nearer God's Mother than most earthly things?
— That if 't be faded 't is with prayer's sole breath —
That the one day it boasted was God's day?
Still, I do thank you! Had you used respect,
Here might I dwindle to my last white leaf,
Here lose life's latest freshness, which even yet
May yield some wandering insect rest and food:
So, fling me forth, and — all is best for all!
[After a pause.] Prince Berthold, who art Juliers'

Duke it seems —
The King's choice, and the Emperor's, and the

Pope's — 180

Pope's — 180

Take this People! Tell not me

Be mine, too! Take this People! Tell not me Of rescripts, precedents, authorities,

— But take them, from a heart that yearns to give! Find out their love, — I could not; find their fear, — I would not; find their like, — I never shall,

Among the flowers! [Taking off her coronet.

Colombe of Ravestein

Thanks God she is no longer Duchess here!

Valence [advancing to Guibert, Sir Guibert,

knight, they call you — this of mine Is the first step I ever set at court.

You dared make me your instrument, I find; For that, so sure as you and I are men,

We reckon to the utmost presently:

But as you are a courtier and I none,

Your knowledge may instruct me. I, already,

Have too far outraged, by my ignorance Of courtier-ways, this lady, to proceed

A second step and risk addressing her:

— I am degraded — you let me address!

Out of her presence, all is plain enough

What I shall do — but in her presence, too,
Surely there's something proper to be done.

[To the others.] You, gentles, tell me if I guess
aright —

May I not strike this man to earth?

The Courtiers [as Guibert springs forward, with-holding him].

Let go!

— The clothiers' spokesman, Guibert? Grace a

churl?

The Duchess [to Valence]. Oh, be acquainted with your party, sir!

He's of the oldest lineage Juliers boasts;

A lion crests him for a cognizance;

"Scorning to waver"—that's his 'scutcheon's word;

His office with the new Duke — probably
The same in honor as with me; or more,
By so much as this gallant turn deserves.
He's now, I dare say, of a thousand times
The rank and influence that remain with her
Whose part you take! So, lest for taking it
You suffer . . .

Valence. I may strike him then to earth? Guibert [falling on his knee]. Great and dear lady,

pardon me! Hear once!

Believe me and be merciful — be just! I could not bring myself to give that paper Without a keener pang than I dared meet

— And so felt Clugnet here, and Maufroy here 220 — No one dared meet it. Protestation's cheap, —

But, if to die for you did any good,

[To GAUCELME.] Would not I die, sir? Say your worst of me!

But it does no good, that 's the mournful truth. And since the hint of a resistance, even, Would just precipitate, on you the first,
A speedier ruin — I shall not deny,
Saving myself indubitable pain,
I thought to give you pleasure (who might say?)
By showing that your only subject found
To carry the sad notice, was the man
Precisely ignorant of its contents;
A nameless, mere provincial advocate;
One whom 't was like you never saw before,
Never would see again. All has gone wrong;
But I meant right, God knows, and you, I trust!
The Duchess. A nameless advocate, this gentleman?

— (I pardon you, Sir Guibert!)

Guibert [rising, to Valence]. Sir, and you?

Valence. — Rejoice that you are lightened of a

Now, you have only me to reckon with.

The Duchess. One I have never seen, much less obliged?

Valence. Dare I speak, lady?

The Duchess.

I rule no longer?

Dare you! Heard you not

Valence. Lady, if your rule

Were based alone on such a ground as these [Pointing to the Courtiers.

Could furnish you, — abjure it! They have hidden A source of true dominion from your sight.

The Duchess. You hear them — no such source is left . . .

Whose haggard craftsmen rose to starve this day,
Starve now, and will lie down at night to starve,
Sure of a like to-morrow — but as sure
Of a most unlike morrow-after-that,

Since end things must, end howsoe'er things may. What curbs the brute-force instinct in its hour? What makes — instead of rising, all as one, And teaching fingers, so expert to wield Their tool, the broadsword's play or carbine's trick, — What makes that there's an easier help, they think.

For you, whose name so few of them can spell, Whose face scarce one in every hundred saw, — You simply have to understand their wrongs, And wrongs will vanish — so, still trades are plied, And swords lie rusting, and myself stand here? There is a vision in the heart of each Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure: And these embodied in a woman's form That best transmits them, pure as first received, From God above her, to mankind below. Will you derive your rule from such a ground, Or rather hold it by the suffrage, say, 270 Of this man — this — and this?

The Duchess [after a pause]. You come from

How many are at Cleves of such a mind? Valence [from his paper]. "We, all the manufacturers of Cleves —"

The Duchess. Or stay, sir—lest I seem too covetous -

Are you my subject? such as you describe, Am I to you, though to no other man?

Valence [from his paper]. — "Valence, ordained

your Advocate at Cleves"—

The Duchess [replacing the coronet]. Then I remain Cleves' Duchess! Take you note, While Cleves but yields one subject of this stamp,

I stand her lady till she waves me off!
For her sake, all the Prince claims I withhold;
Laugh at each menace; and, his power defying,
Return his missive with its due contempt!

[Casting it away.

Guibert [pieking it up]. — Which to the Prince I will deliver, lady,

(Note it down, Gaucelme) — with your message too!

The Duehess. I think the office is a subject's, sir!

— Either . . . how style you him? — my special

guarder

The Marshal's — for who knows but violence
May follow the delivery? — Or, perhaps,
My Chancellor's — for law may be to urge
On its receipt! — Or, even my Chamberlain's —
For I may violate established form!

[To Valence.] Sir, — for the half-hour till this

service ends,

Will you become all these to me?

Valence [falling on his knee]. My liege!

The Duchess. Give me!

[The Courtiers present their badges of office. [Putting them by.] Whatever was their virtue

once,

They need new consecration. [Raising Valence.]
Are you mine?

I will be Duchess yet! [She retires. The Courtiers. Our Duchess yet!

A glorious lady! Worthy love and dread!
I'll stand by her. — And I, whate'er betide!

Guibert [to Valence]. Well done, well done, sir!
I care not who knows,

You have done nobly and I envy you — Tho' I am but unfairly used, I think: For when one gets a place like this I hold,

One gets too the remark that its mere wages,
The pay and the preferment, make our prize.
Talk about zeal and faith apart from these,
We're laughed at — much would zeal and faith
subsist

Without these also! Yet, let these be stopped,
Our wages discontinue, — then, indeed,
Our zeal and faith, (we hear on every side,)
Are not released — having been pledged away
I wonder, for what zeal and faith in turn?
Hard money purchased me my place! No, no —
I'm right, sir — but your wrong is better still,
If I had time and skill to argue it.

Therefore, I say, I 'll serve you, how you please—If you like, — fight you, as you seem to wish—(The kinder of me that, in sober truth,

I never dreamed I did you any harm) . .

Gaucelme. — Or, kinder still, you 'll introduce, no doubt,

His merits to the Prince who 's just at hand, And let no hint drop he 's made Chancellor

And Chamberlain and Heaven knows what beside!

Clugnet [to Valence]. You stare, young sir, and threaten! Let me say,

That at your age, when first I came to court,

I was not much above a gentleman;

While now . . .

Valence. You are Head-Lackey? With your office

I have not yet been graced, sir!

Other Courtiers [to Clugnet]. Let him talk!

Fidelity, disinterestedness,

Excuse so much! Men claim my worship ever who staunchly and steadfastly . . .

Enter ADOLF.

The Prince arrives. Adolf.

Courtiers. Ha? How?

He leaves his guard a stage behind Adolf. At Aix, and enters almost by himself.

1st Courtier. The Prince! This foolish business

puts all out.

2nd Courtier. Let Gaucelme speak first!

3rd Courtier. Better I began

About the state of Juliers: should one say

All's prosperous and inviting him?

4th Courtier. — Or rather.

All's prostrate and imploring him?

5th Courtier. That 's best

Where 's the Cleves' paper, by the way?

Sir - sir -

4th Courtier [to Valence]. Sir — If you'll but lend that paper — trust it me,

I'll warrant . . .

5th Courtier. Softly, sir — the Marshal's duty! Clugnet. Has not the Chamberlain a hearing first

By virtue of his patent?

Patents? — Duties? Gaucelme.

All that, my masters, must begin again!

One word composes the whole controversy:

We 're simply now — the Prince's!

The Others. Av — the Prince's!

Enter Sabyne.

Sabyne. Adolf! Bid . . . Oh, no time for ceremony!

Where 's whom our lady calls her only subject? She needs him. Who is here the Duchess's?

Valence [starting from his reverie]. Most gratefully I follow to her feet. 350

ACT III

AFTERNOON

Scene — The Vestibule

Enter Prince Berthold and Melchion.

Berthold. A thriving little burgh this Juliers looks. [Half-apart.] Keep Juliers, and as good you kept Cologne:

Better try Aix, though! —

Melchior. Please 't your Highness speak? Berthold [as before]. Aix, Cologne, Frankfort, — Milan; — Rome! —

Melchior. The Grave.

More weary seems your Highness, I remark, Than sundry conquerors whose path I 've watched Through fire and blood to any prize they gain. I could well wish you, for your proper sake, Had met some shade of opposition here — Found a blunt seneschal refuse unlock, 10 Or a sacred usher lead your steps astray. You must not look for next achievement's palm So easily: this will hurt your conquering.

Berthold. My next? Ay, as you say, my next

and next!

Well, I am tired, that 's truth, and moody too, This quiet entrance-morning: listen why! Our little burgh, now, Juliers — 'tis indeed One link, however insignificant, Of the great chain by which I reach my hope, — A link I must secure; but otherwise, You'd wonder I esteem it worth my grasp. Just see what life is, with its shifts and turns! It happens now — this very nook — to be

20

A place that once . . . not a long while since, neither — When I lived an ambiguous hanger-on

Of foreign courts, and bore my claims about, Discarded by one kinsman, and the other A poor priest merely, — then, I say, this place Shone my ambition's object; to be Duke — Seemed then, what to be Emperor seems now. My rights were far from judged as plain and sure In those days as of late, I promise you: And 't was my day-dream, Lady Colombe here Might e'en compound the matter, pity me, Be struck, say, with my chivalry and grace (I was a boy!) — bestow her hand at length, And make me Duke, in her right if not mine. Here am I, Duke confessed, at Juliers now.

Hearken: if ever I be Emperor,

Remind me what I felt and said to-day! Melchior. All this consoles a bookish man like me.

— And so will weariness cling to you. Wrong, Wrong! Had you sought the lady's court yourself,— Faced the redoubtables composing it, Flattered this, threatened that man, bribed the

other.

Pleaded by writ and word and deed, your cause, — Conquered a footing inch by painful inch, — And, after long years' struggle, pounced at last On her for prize, — the right life had been lived, And justice done to divers faculties 50 Shut in that brow. Yourself were visible

As you stood victor, then; whom now — (your pardon!)

I am forced narrowly to search and see, So are you hid by helps — this Pope, your uncle —

80

Your cousin, the other King! You are a mind, — They, body: too much of mere legs-and-arms Obstructs the mind so! Match these with their like: Match mind with mind!

Berthold. And where 's your mind to match?
They show me legs-and-arms to cope withal!
I'd subjugate this city — where 's its mind?

[The Courtiers enter should

[The Courtiers enter slowly.

Melchior. Got out of sight when you came troops and all!

And in its stead, here greets you flesh-and-blood: A smug economy of both, this first!

[As Clugnet bows obsequiously.

Well done, gout, all considered! — I may go? Berthold. Help me receive them!

Melchior. Oh, they just will say

What yesterday at Aix their fellows said—
At Treves, the day before! Sir Prince, my friend,
Why do you let your life slip thus? — Meantime,

I have my little Juliers to achieve —

The understanding this tough Platonist,
Your holy uncle disinterred, Amelius:
Lend me a company of horse and foot,

To help me through his tractate — gain my Duchy! Berthold. And Empire, after that is gained, will

be — ?

Melchior. To help me through your uncle's comment, Prince! [Goes.

Berthold. Ah? Well: he o'er-refines — the scholar's fault!

How do I let my life slip? Say, this life, I lead now, differs from the common life Of other men in mere degree, not kind, Of joys and griefs — still there is such definitions.

Of joys and griefs, — still there is such degree Mere largeness in a life is something, sure, — Enough to care about and struggle for, In this world: for this world, the size of things; The sort of things, for that to come, no doubt. A great is better than a little aim:

And when I wooed Priscilla's rosy mouth

And failed so, under that gray convent-wall, Was I more happy than I should be now

[By this time, the Courtiers are ranged before him.

If failing of my Empire? Not a whit.

— Here comes the mind, it once had tasked me sore

To baffle, but for my advantages!

All's best as 't is: these scholars talk and talk.

[Seats himself.

The Courtiers. Welcome our Prince to Juliers!—to his heritage!

Our dutifullest service proffer we!

Clugnet. I, please your Highness, having exercised

The function of Grand Chamberlain at court, With much acceptance, as men testify . . .

Berthold. I cannot greatly thank you, gentlemen! The Pope declares my claim to the Duchy founded On strictest justice — you concede it, therefore, 100 I do not wonder: and the kings my friends Protest they mean to see such claim enforced, — You easily may offer to assist.

But there 's a slight discretionary power To serve me in the matter, you 've had long, Though late you use it. This is well to say — But could you not have said it months ago? I 'm not denied my own Duke's truncheon, true — 'T is flung me — I stoop down, and from the ground Pick it, with all you placid standers-by:

And now I have it, gems and mire at once,

Grace go with it to my soiled hands, you say!

120

Guibert. (By Paul, the advocate our doughty friend

Cuts the best figure!)

Gaucelme. If our ignorance May have offended, sure our loyalty . . Gaucelme.

Berthold. Loyalty? Yours? Oh — of your-

selves you speak!

I mean the Duchess all this time, I hope!

And since I have been forced repeat my claims

As if they never had been urged before,

As I began, so must I end, it seems. The formal answer to the grave demand!

What says the lady?

Courtiers [one to another]. 1st Courtier. Marshal!

2nd Courtier. Orator!

Guibert. A variation of our mistress' way!

Wipe off his boots' dust, Clugnet! — that, he waits!

1st Courtier. Your place!

2nd Courtier. Just now it was your own!

Guibert. The devil's!

Berthold [to Guibert]. Come forward, friend you with the paper, there!

Is Juliers the first city I 've obtained?

By this time, I may boast proficiency

In each decorum of the circumstance.

Give it me as she gave it — the petition, Demand, you style it! What's required, in brief?

What title's reservation, appanage's

Allowance? I heard all at Treves, last week.

Gaucelme [to Guibert]. "Give it him as she gave

Guibert. And why not?

[To Berthold.] The lady crushed your summons thus together,

And bade me, with the very greatest scorn

So fair a frame could hold, inform you . . . Stop —

Idiot!

Guibert. — Inform you she denied your claim,

Defied yourself! (I tread upon his heel,

The blustering advocate!)

Berthold. By heaven and earth! 140

Dare you jest, sir?

Guibert. Did they at Treves, last week?

Berthold [starting up]. Why then, I look much

bolder than I knew,

And you prove better actors than I thought:
Since, as I live, I took you as you entered
For just so many dearest friends of mine,
Fled from the sinking to the rising power
— The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!
Whereas, I am alone here for the moment,

With every soldier left behind at Aix!

Silence? That means the worst? I thought as much!

What follows next then?

Courtiers. Gracious Prince, he raves!
Guibert. He asked the truth and why not get the

truth?

Berthold. Am I prisoner? Speak, will somebody?

— But why stand paltering with imbeciles?

Let me see her, or . . .

Guibert. Her, without her leave,

Shall no one see; she 's Duchess yet!

Courtiers [footsteps without, as they are disputing].

Good chance!

She's here — the Lady Colombe's self!

Berthold. 'T is well!

[Aside.] Array a handful thus against my world? Not ill done, truly! Were not this a mind 159 To match one's mind with? Colombe! Let us wait! I failed so, under that gray convent wall! She comes.

Guibert. The Duchess! Strangers, range your-selves!

[As the Duchess enters in conversation with Valence, Berthold and the Courtiers fall back a little.

The Duchess. Presagefully it beats, presagefully, My heart: the right is Berthold's and not mine.

Valence. Grant that he has the right, dare I mis-

trust

Your power to acquiesce so patiently

As you believe, in such a dream-like change

Of fortune — change abrupt, profound, complete? The Duchess. Ah, the first bitterness is over now!

Bitter I may have felt it to confront
The truth, and ascertain those natures' value

I had so counted on; that was a pang:

But I did bear it, and the worst is over.

Let the Prince take them!

Valence. And take Juliers too?

— Your people without crosses, wands and chains —

Only with hearts?

The Duchess. There I feel guilty, sir! I cannot give up what I never had:

For I ruled these, not them — these stood between.

Shall I confess, sir? I have heard by stealth

Of Berthold from the first; more news and more: 180

Closer and closer swam the thundercloud,

But I was safely housed with these, I knew.

At times when to the casement I would turn,

At a bird's passage or a flower-trail's play,

I caught the storm's red glimpses on its edge—Yet I was sure some one of all these friends

Would interpose: I followed the bird's flight

Or plucked the flower: some one would interpose! Valence. Not one thought on the People — and Cleves there!

The Duchess. Now, sadly conscious my real sway was missed, 190

Its shadow goes without so much regret: Else could I not again thus calmly bid you,

Answer Prince Berthold!

Valence. Then you acquiesce? The Duchess. Remember over whom it was I ruled!

Guibert [stepping forward]. Prince Berthold, yonder, craves an audience, lady!

The Duchess [to Valence]. I only have to turn, and I shall face

Prince Berthold! Oh, my very heart is sick! It is the daughter of a line of Dukes This scornful insolent adventurer Will bid depart from my dead father's halls!

200

I shall not answer him — dispute with him — But, as he bids, depart! Prevent it, sir!

Sir — but a mere day's respite! Urge for me What I shall call to mind I should have urged When time 's gonc by: 't will all be mine, you urge!

A day — an hour — that I myself may lay

My rule down! 'T is too sudden — must not be!

The world's to hear of it! Once done — forever! How will it read, sir? How be sung about?

Prevent it!

Berthold [approaching]. Your frank indignation, lady, 210

Cannot escape me. Overbold I seem; But somewhat should be pardoned my surprise At this reception, — this defiance, rather. And if, for their and your sake, I rejoice

Your virtues could inspire a trusty few To make such gallant stand in your behalf, I cannot but be sorry, for my own, Your friends should force me to retrace my steps: Since I no longer am permitted speak After the pleasant peaceful course prescribed 220 No less by courtesy than relationship -Which I remember, if you once forgot. But never must attack pass unrepelled. Suffer that, through you, I demand of these, Who controverts my claim to Juliers? The Duchess. -Me You say, you do not speak to — Berthold. Of your subjects I ask, then: whom do you accredit? Where Stand those should answer?

Valence [advancing]. The lady is alone.

Berthold. Alone, and thus? So weak and yet so bold? 999

Valence. I said she was alone —

Berthold. And weak, I said.

Valence. When is man strong until he feels alone? It was some lonely strength at first, be sure, Created organs, such as those you seek, By which to give its varied purpose shape: And, naming the selected ministrants, Took sword, and shield, and sceptre, — each, a man! That strength performed its work and passed its

You see our lady: there, the old shapes stand! — A Marshal, Chamberlain, and Chancellor — "Be helped their way, into their death put life 240 And find advantage!" — so you counsel us. But let strength feel alone, seek help itself, — And, as the inland-hatched sea-creature hunts

The sea's breast out, — as, littered 'mid the waves The desert-brute makes for the desert's joy, So turns our lady to her true resource, Passing o'er hollow fictions, worn-out types, — And I am first her instinct fastens on. And prompt I say, as clear as heart can speak, The People will not have you; nor shall have! It is not merely I shall go bring Cleves And fight you to the last,—though that does much, And men and children, — ay, and women too, Fighting for home, are rather to be feared Than mercenaries fighting for their pay – But, say you beat us, since such things have been, And, where this Juliers laughed, you set your foot Upon a steaming bloody plash — what then? Stand you the more our lord that there you stand? Lord it o'er troops whose force you concentrate, 260 A pillared flame whereto all ardors tend -Lord it 'mid priests whose schemes you amplify, A cloud of smoke 'neath which all shadows brood — But never, in this gentle spot of earth, Can you become our Colombe, our play-queen, For whom, to furnish lilies for her hair, We'd pour our veins forth to enrich the soil. — Our conqueror? Yes! — Our despot? Yes! — Our Duke?

Know yourself, know us!

Berthold [who has been in thought]. Know your lady, also!

[Very deferentially.] — To whom I needs must exculpate myself

For having made a rash demand, at least.
Wherefore to you, sir, who appear to be
Herchief adviser, I submit my claims, [Giving papers.
But, this step taken, take no further step,

290

Until the Duchess shall pronounce their worth. Here be our meeting-place; at night, its time: Till when I humbly take the lady's leave!

[He withdraws. As the Duchess turns to VALENCE, the Courtiers interchange glances

and come forward a little.

1st Courtier. So, this was their device!

No bad device! 2nd Courtier. 3rd Courtier. You'd say they love each other,

Guibert's friend

From Cleves, and she, the Duchess!

— And moreover, 4th Courtier.

That all Prince Berthold comes for, is to help

Their loves!

5th Courtier. Pray, Guibert, what is next to do? Guibert [advancing]. I laid my office at the Duchess' foot —

Others. And I — and I — and I!

I took them, sirs. The Duchess.

Guibert [apart to VALENCE]. And now, sir, I am

simple knight again —

Guibert, of the great ancient house, as yet That never bore affront; whate'er your birth,— As things stand now, I recognize yourself

(If you'll accept experience of some date)

As like to be the leading man o' the time,

Therefore as much above me now, as I

Seemed above you this morning. Then, I offered

To fight you: will you be as generous

And now fight me?

Ask when my life is mine! Valence.

Guibert. ('T is hers now!)

Clugnet [apart to Valence, as Guibert turns from him]. You, sir, have insulted me Grossly, — will grant me, too, the selfsame favor

You've granted him, just now, I make no question? Valence. I promise you, as him, sir.

Clugnet. Do you so?

Handsomely said! I hold you to it, sir.

You 'll get me reinstated in my office 300 As you will Guibert!

The Duchess. I would be alone!

> They begin to retire slowly; as Valence is about to follow

Alone, sir — only with my heart: you stay!

Gaucelme. You hear that? Ah, light breaks

upon me! Cleves —

It was at Cleves some man harangued us all — With great effect, — so those who listened said, My thoughts being busy elsewhere: was this he? Guibert, — your strange, disinterested man! Your uncorrupted, if uncourtly friend!

The modest worth you mean to patronize!

He cares about no Duchesses, not he-

His sole concern is with the wrongs of Cleves! What, Guibert? What, it breaks on you at last?

Guibert. Would this hall's floor were a mine's roof! I'd back

310

And in her very face . . .

Gaucelme. Apply the match
That fired the train, — and where would you be, pray?

Guibert. With him!

Gaucelme. Stand, rather, safe outside with me! The mine 's charged: shall I furnish you the match And place you properly? To the antechamber!

Guibert. Can you?

Gaucelme. Try me! Your friend's in fortune! Guibert. Quick —

To the antechamber! He is pale with bliss!

Gaucelme. No wonder! Mark her eyes!
Guibert. To the antechamber!
[The Courtiers retire.

The Duchess. Sir, could you know all you have done for me

You were content! You spoke, and I am saved. Valence. Be not too sanguine, lady! Ere you dream,

That transient flush of generosity
Fades off, perchance. The man, beside, is gone, —
Him we might bend; but see, the papers here —
Inalterably his requirement stays,

And cold hard words have we to deal with now. In that large eye there seemed a latent pride, 330

To self-denial not incompetent,

But very like to hold itself dispensed From such a grace: however, let us hope!

He is a noble spirit in noble form.

I wish he less had bent that brow to smile As with the fancy how he could subject Himself upon occasion to — himself!

From rudeness, violence, you rest secure; But do not think your Duchy rescued yet!

The Duchess. You, — who have opened a new world to me,

Will never take the faded language up Of that I leave? My Duchy — keeping it, Or losing it — is that my sole world now?

Valence. Ill have I spoken if you thence despise Juliers; although the lowest, on true grounds,

Be worth more than the highest rule, on false:

Aspire to rule, on the true grounds!

The Duchess. Nay, hear—

False, I will never — rash, I would not be!
This is indeed my birthday — soul and body,

Its hours have done on me the work of years. 350 You hold the requisition: ponder it! If I have right, my duty 's plain: if he — Say so, nor ever change a tone of voice! At night you meet the Prince; meet me at eve! Till when, farewell! This discomposes you? Believe in your own nature, and its force Of renovating mine! I take my stand Only as under me the earth is firm: So, prove the first step stable, all will prove. That first, I choose: [Laying her hand on his.] — the next to take, choose you! [She withdraws. 360 Valence [after a pause]. What drew down this on me? — on me, dead once, She thus bids live, — since all I hitherto Thought dead in me, youth's ardors and emprise,

Burst into life before her, as she bids

Who needs them. Whither will this reach, where end?

Her hand's print burns on mine . . . Yet she's above —

So very far above me! All 's too plain: I served her when the others sank away, And she rewards me as such souls reward — The changed voice, the suffusion of the cheek, The eye's acceptance, the expressive hand, — Reward, that 's little, in her generous thought, Though all to me . .

I cannot so disclaim Heaven's gift, nor call it other than it is! She loves me!

[Looking at the Prince's papers.] — Which love, these, perchance, forbid.

Can I decide against myself — pronounce She is the Duchess and no mate for me?

— Cleves, help me! Teach me, — every haggard face, —

To sorrow and endure! I will do right
Whatever be the issue. Help me, Cleves!

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ACT IV

EVENING

Scene — An Antechamber.

Enter the Courtiers.

Maufroy. Now, then, that we may speak — how spring this mine?

Gaucelme. Is Guibert ready for its match? He cools!

Not so friend Valence with the Duchess there! "Stay, Valence! Are not you my better self?"

And her cheek mantled —

Guibert. Well, she loves him, sir:

And more, — since you will have it I grow cool, — She 's right: he 's worth it.

Gaucelme. For his deeds to-day?

Say so!

Guibert. What should I say beside?

Gaucelme. Not this —

For friendship's sake leave this for me to say—
That we 're the dupes of an egregious cheat!

This plain unpractised suitor, who found way
To the Duchess through the merest die's turn-up
A year ago, had seen her and been seen,

Loved and been loved.

Guibert. Impossible!

Gaucelme. — Nor say,

How sly and exquisite a trick, moreover,

R. D. — 11

Was this which — taking not their stand on facts Boldly, for that had been endurable, But worming on their way by craft, they choose Resort to, rather, — and which you and we. Sheep-like, assist them in the playing-off! 20 The Duchess thus parades him as preferred. Not on the honest ground of preference, Secing first, liking more, and there an end — But as we all had started equally, And at the close of a fair race he proved The only valiant, sage and loyal man. Herself, too, with the pretty fits and starts,— The careless, winning, candid ignorance Of what the Prince might challenge or forego — She had a hero in reserve! What risk 30 Ran she? This deferential easy Prince Who brings his claims for her to ratify —He's just her puppet for the nonce! You'll see,— Valence pronounces, as is equitable. Against him: off goes the confederate: As equitably, Valence takes her hand!

The Chancellor. You run too fast: her hand, no

subject takes.

Do not our archives hold her father's will?
That will provides against such accident,
And gives next heir, Prince Berthold, the reversion
Of Juliers, which she forfeits, wedding so.

Gaucelme. I know that, well as you, — but does

the Prince?

Knows Berthold, think you, that this plan, he helps, For Valence's ennoblement, — would end, If crowned with the success which seems its due, In making him the very thing he plays, The actual Duke of Juliers? All agree That Colombe's title waived or set aside,

He is next heir.

The Chancellor. Incontrovertibly.

Gaucelme. Guibert, your match, now, to the train!

Guibert.

Enough!

I'm with you: selfishness is best again.

I thought of turning honest — what a dream!

Let's wake now!

Gaucelme. Selfish, friend, you never were: 'T was but a series of revenges taken

On your unselfishness for prospering ill.

But now that you 're grown wiser, what 's our course? Guibert. — Wait, I suppose, till Valence weds our lady,

And then, if we must needs revenge ourselves,

Apprise the Prince.

Gaucelme. — The Prince, ere then dismissed With thanks for playing his mock part so well? 60 Tell the Prince now, sir! Ay, this very night, Ere he accepts his dole and goes his way, Explain how such a marriage makes him Duke, Then trust his gratitude for the surprise!

Guibert. — Our lady wedding Valence all the

same

As if the penalty were undisclosed? Good! If she loves, she 'll not disown her love,

Throw Valence up. I wonder you see that.

Gaucelme. The shame of it—the suddenness

and shame!

Within her, the inclining heart — without.

Within her, the inclining heart—without, A terrible array of witnesses—

And Valence by, to keep her to her word, With Berthold's indignation or disgust!

We'll try it! — Not that we can venture much.

Her confidence we 've lost forever: Berthold's Is all to gain.

Guibert. To-night, then, venture we!
Yet — if lost confidence might be renewed?

Gaucelme. Never in noble natures! With the

base ones, —

Twist off the crab's claw, wait a smarting-while, And something grows and grows and gets to be 80

A mimic of the lost joint, just so like As keeps in mind it never, never will

Replace its predecessor! Crabs do that:

But lop the lion's foot — and . . .

Guibert. To the Prince!
Gaucelme [aside]. And come what will to the

lion's foot, I pay you,

My cat's-paw, as I long have yearned to pay.

[Aloud.] Footsteps! Himself! 'T is Valence breaks on us,

Exulting that their scheme succeeds. We'll hence—And perfect ours! Consult the archives, first—Then, fortified with knowledge, seek the Hall! 90

Clugnet [to Gaucelme as they retire]. You have not smiled so since your father died!

As they retire, enter Valence with papers.

Walence. So must it be! I have examined these With scarce a palpitating heart — so calm, Keeping her image almost wholly off, Setting upon myself determined watch, Repelling to the uttermost his claims:
And the result is — all men would pronounce And not I, only, the result to be —
Berthold is heir; she has no shade of right
To the distinction which divided us,
But, suffered to rule first, I know not why,
Her rule connived at by those Kings and Popes,

To serve some devil's-purpose, — now 't is gained, Whate'er it was, the rule expires as well. — Valence, this rapture . . . selfish can it be? Eject it from your heart, her home! — It stays! Ah, the brave world that opens on us both! — Do my poor townsmen so esteem it? Cleves, — I need not your pale faces! This, reward For service done to you? Too horrible! 110 I never served you: 't was myself I served — Nay, served not — rather saved from punishment Which, had I failed you then, would plague me now. My life continues yours, and your life, mine. But if, to take God's gift, I swerve no step-Cleves! If I breathe no prayer for it — if she, [Footsteps without. Colombe, that comes now, freely gives herself—

Enter Prince Berthold.

Will Cleves require, that, turning thus to her,

Ι...

Pardon, sir! I did not look for you
Till night, i' the Hall; nor have as yet declared
My judgment to the lady.

Berthold. So I hoped.

Valence. And yet I scarcely know why that should check

The frank disclosure of it first to you — What her right seems, and what, in consequence, She will decide on.

Berthold. That I need not ask.

Valence. You need not: I have proved the lady's mind:

And, justice being to do, dare act for her.

Berthold. Doubtless she has a very noble mind.

Valence. Oh, never fear but she 'll in each conjuncture

She no whit depends

Bear herself bravely! She no whit depends On circumstance; as she adorns a throne,

She had adorned . . .

Berthold. A cottage — in what book

Have I read that, of every queen that lived?

A throne! You have not been instructed, sure,

To forestall my request?

Valence. 'T is granted, sir!

My heart instructs me. I have scrutinized

Your claims . . .

Berthold. Ah — claims, you mean, at first preferred?

I come, before the hour appointed me,

To pray you let those claims at present rest,

In favour of a new and stronger one.

140

Well was a stronger; on the

Valence. You shall not need a stronger: on the part

O' the lady, all you offer I accept,

Since one clear right suffices: yours is clear.

Propose!

Berthold. I offer her my hand.

Valence. Your hand?

Berthold. A Duke's, yourself say; and, at no far time,

Something here whispers me — an Emperor's.

The lady's mind is noble: which induced

This seizure of occasion ere my claims

Were — settled, let us amicably say!

Valence. Your hand!

Berthold. (He will fall down and kiss it next!)

149

Sir, this astonishment's too flattering,

Nor must you hold your mistress' worth so cheap.

Enhance it, rather, — urge that blood is blood —

159

The daughter of the Burgraves, Landgraves, Markgraves,

Remains their daughter! I shall scarce gainsay. Elsewhere or here, the lady needs must rule: Like the imperial crown's great chrysoprase, They talk of — somewhat out of keeping there,

And yet no jewel for a meaner cap. *Valence*. You wed the Duchess?

Berthold. Cry you mercy, friend!

Will the match also influence fortunes here?

A natural solicitude enough.

Be certain, no bad chance it proves for you!

However high you take your present stand,
There's prospect of a higher still remove—

For Juliers will not be my resting-place,
And, when I have to choose a substitute
To rule the little burgh, I'll think of you
Who need not give your mates a character.
And yet I doubt your fitness to supplant
The gray smooth Chamberlain: he'd hesitate
A doubt his lady could demean herself
So low as to accept me. Courage, sir!
I like your method better: feeling's play
Is franker much, and flatters me beside.

Welcome I are to gay, you love her?

Valence. I am to say, you love her?

Berthold.

Say that too!

Love has no great concernment, thinks the world,

With a Duke's marriage. How go precedents

In Juliers' story — how use Juliers' Dukes?

I see you have them here in goodly row;

You must be Luitpold — ay, a stalwart sire!

Say, I have been arrested suddenly

In my ambition's course, its rocky course,

By this sweet flower: I fain would gather it

And then proceed: so say and speedily

— (Nor stand there like Duke Luitpold's brazen

self!)

Enough, sir: you possess my mind, I think.
This is my claim, the others being withdrawn,
And to this be it that, i' the Hall to-night,
Your lady's answer comes; till when, farewell!

[He retires.]

Valence [after a pause]. The heavens and earth stay as they were; my heart

Beats as it beat: the truth remains the truth.

What falls away, then, if not faith in her?

Was it my faith, that she could estimate

Love's value, and, such faith still guiding me,

Dare I now test her? Or grew faith so strong

Solely because no power of test was mine?

Enter the Duchess.

The Duchess. My fate, sir! Ah, you turn away. All 's over.

But you are sorry for me? Be not so!
What I might have become, and never was,
Regret with me! What I have merely been,
Rejoice I am no longer! What I seem
Beginning now, in my new state, to be,
Hope that I am! — for, once my rights proved void,
This heavy roof seems easy to exchange
For the blue sky outside — my lot henceforth.

Valence. And what a lot is Berthold's!

The Duchess. How of him?

Valence. He gathers earth's whole good into his arms;

Standing, as man now, stately, strong and wise, Marching to fortune, not surprised by her.

One great aim, like a guiding-star, above—

Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift His manhood to the height that takes the prize; A prize not near — lest overlooking earth He rashly spring to seize it — nor remote, So that he rest upon his path content: But day by day, while shimmering grows shine, And the faint circlet prophesies the orb. He sees so much as, just evolving these, The stateliness, the wisdom and the strength, 220 To due completion, will suffice this life, And lead him at his grandest to the grave. After this star, out of a night he springs; A beggar's cradle for the throne of thrones He quits; so, mounting, feels each step he mounts, Nor, as from each to each exultingly He passes, overleaps one grade of joy. This, for his own good: — with the world, each gift Of God and man, — reality, tradition, Fancy and fact — so well environ him, 230 That as a mystic panoply they serve – Of force, untenanted, to awe mankind, And work his purpose out with half the world, While he, their master, dexterously slipt From such encumbrance, is meantime employed With his own prowess on the other half. Thus shall be prosper, every day's success Adding, to what is he, a solid strength An aëry might to what encircles him, Till at the last, so life's routine lends help, 240 That as the Emperor only breathes and moves, His shadow shall be watched, his step or stalk Become a comfort or a portent, how He trails his ermine take significance,— Till even his power shall cease to be most power, And men shall dread his weakness more, nor dare

Peril their earth its bravest, first and best, Its typified invincibility. Thus shall he go on, greatening, till he ends — The man of men, the spirit of all flesh, 250 The fiery centre of an earthly world! The Duchess. Some such a fortune I had dreamed should rise Out of my own — that is, above my power Seemed other, greater potencies to stretch— Valence. For you? The Duchess. It was not I moved there, I think: But one I could, — though constantly beside, And aye approaching, — still keep distant from, And so adore. 'T was a man moved there. Who? Valence. The Duchess. I felt the spirit, never saw the face. Valence. See it! 'T is Berthold's! He enables 260 you To realize your vision. Berthold? The Duchess. Duke — Valence. Emporer to be: he proffers you his hand. The Duchess. Generous and princely! Valence. He is all of this. The Duchess. Thanks, Berthold, for my father's sake! No hand Degrades me. You accept the proffered hand? Valence. The Duchess. That he should love me! "Loved" I did not say. Valence. Had that been — love might so incline the Prince To the world's good, the world that 's at his foot, — I do not know, this moment, I should dare

Desire that you refused the world — and Cleves —

The sacrifice he asks.

The Duchess. Not love me, sir? Valence. He scarce affirmed it.

The Duchess. May not deeds affirm? Valence. What does he? . . . Yes, yes, very much he does!

All the shame saved, he thinks, and sorrow saved — Immitigable sorrow, so he thinks, —

Sorrow that 's deeper than we dream, perchance.

The Duchess. Is not this love?

Valence. So very much he does!

For look, you can descend now gracefully:

All doubts are banished, that the world might have.

Or worst, the doubts yourself, in after-time, 280 May call up of your heart's sincereness now. To such, reply, "I could have kept my rule — Increased it to the utmost of my dreams — Yet I abjured it." This, he does for you: It is munificently much.

The Duchess. Still "much"!

But why is it not love, sir? Answer me!

Valence. Because not one of Berthold's words and looks

Had gone with love's presentment of a flower To the beloved: because bold confidence, Open superiority, free pride 290 Love owns not, yet were all that Berthold owned: Because where reason, even, finds no flaw, Unerringly a lover's instinct may.

The Duchess. You reason, then, and doubt? I love, and know. Valence.

The Duchess. You love? How strange! I never cast a thought

On that. Just see our selfishness! You seemed So much my own . . . I had no ground — and yet, I never dreamed another might divide My power with you, much less exceed it.

Valence. Lady,

I am yours wholly.

The Duchess. Oh, no, not mine! 300

'T is not the same now, nevermore can be.

— Your first love; doubtless. Well, what's gone from me?

What have I lost in you?

Valence. My heart replies —

No loss there! So, to Berthold back again: This offer of his hand, he bids me make—
Its obvious magnitude is well to weigh.

The Duchess. She's . . . yes, she must be very

fair for you!

Valence. I am a simple advocate of Cleves.

The Duchess. You! With the heart and brain that so helped me,

I fancied them exclusively my own,

310

Yet find are subject to a stronger sway! She must be . . . tell me, is she very fair?

Valence. Most fair, beyond conception or belief. The Duchess. Black eyes? — no matter! Co-

lombe, the world leads

Its life without you, whom your friends professed The only woman: see how true they spoke!

One lived this while, who never saw your face,

Nor heard your voice — unless . . . Is she from Cleves?

Valence. Cleves knows her well.

The Duchess. Ah — just a fancy, now!

When you poured forth the wrongs of Cleves,—
I said,

—Thought, that is, afterward . . .

Valence. You thought of me?

The Duchess. Of whom else? Only such great cause, I thought,

For such effect: see what true love can do! Cleves is his love. I almost fear to ask

. . . And will not. This is idling: to our work!

Admit before the Prince, without reserve,

My claims misgrounded; then may follow better

. . . When you poured out Cleves' wrongs impetuously,

Was she in your mind?

Valence. All done was done for her

— To humble me!

The Duchess. She will be proud at least. 330

Valence. She?

The Duchess. When you tell her.

Valence. That will never be.

The Duchess. How — are there sweeter things you hope to tell?

No, sir! You counselled me, — I counsel you

In the one point I — any woman — can.

Your worth, the first thing; let her own come next—Say what you did through her, and she through you—

The praises of her beauty afterward!

Will you?

Valence. I dare not.

The Duchess. Dare not?

Valence. She I love

Suspects not such a love in me.

The Duchess. You jest.

Valence. The lady is above me and away.

Not only the brave form, and the bright mind,

And the great heart, combine to press me low—

But all the world calls rank divides us.

The Duchess. Rank!

Now grant me patience! Here 's a man declares Oracularly in another's case —

Sees the true value and the false, for them —

Nay, bids them see it, and they straight do see.

You called my court's love worthless — so it turned:

I threw away as dross my heap of wealth,

And here you stickle for a piece or two!

350

First — has she seen you?

Valence. Yes.

The Duchess. She loves you, then.

Valence. One flash of hope burst; then succeeded night:

And all's at darkest now. Impossible!

The Duchess. We'll try: you are — so to speak — my subject yet?

Valence. As ever — to the death.

The Duchess. Obey me, then!

Valence. I must.

The Duchess. Approach her, and . . . no! first of all

Get more assurance. "My instructress," say, "Was great, descended from a line of kings,

And even fair" — (wait why I say this folly) —

"She said, of all men, none for eloquence, 360

Courage, and (what cast even these to shade)

The heart they sprung from, — none deserved like him

Who saved her at her need: if she said this,

What should not one I love, say?"

Valence. Heaven — this hope —

Oh, lady, you are filling me with fire!

The Duchess. Say this! — nor think I bid you cast aside

One touch of all the awe and reverence;

Nay, make her proud for once to heart's content

That all this wealth of heart and soul's her own!
Think you are all of this, — and, thinking it,
... (Obey!)

Valence. I cannot choose.

The Duchess. Then, kneel to her! [Valence sinks on his knees.

I dream!

Valence. Have mercy! Yours, unto the death,—

I have obeyed. Despise, and let me die!

The Duchess. Alas, sir, is it to be ever thus? Even with you as with the world? I know This morning's service was no vulgar deed Whose motive, once it dares avow itself, Explains all done and infinitely more, So, takes the shelter of a nobler cause. Your service named its true source, — loyalty! 380 The rest 's unsaid again. The Duchess bids you, Rise, sir! The Prince's words were in debate.

Valence [rising]. Rise? Truth, as ever, lady,

comes from you!

I should rise — I who spoke for Cleves, can speak
For Man — yet tremble now, who stood firm then.
I laughed — for 't was past tears — that Cleves
should starve

With all hearts beating loud the infamy,
And no tongue daring trust as much to air:
Yet here, where all hearts speak, shall I be mute?
Oh, lady, for your own sake look on me!
On all I am, and have, and do — heart, brain,
Body and soul, — this Valence and his gifts!
I was proud once: I saw you, and they sank,
So that each, magnified a thousand times,
Were nothing to you — but such nothingness,
Would a crown gild it, or a sceptre prop,
A treasure speed, a laurel-wreath enhance?

What is my own desert? But should your love Have . . . there's no language helps here . . . singled me, -

Then — oh, that wild word "then!" — be just to love, 400

In generosity its attribute!

Love, since you pleased to love! All 's cleared — a stage

For trial of the question kept so long: Judge you — Is love or vanity the best? You, solve it for the world's sake — you, speak first What all will shout one day — you, vindicate Our earth and be its angel! All is said.

Lady, I offer nothing — I am yours:

But, for the cause' sake, look on me and him, 409 And speak!

The Duchess. I have received the Prince's message: Say, I prepare my answer!

Valence. Take me, Cleves!

[He withdraws.

The Duchess. Mournful — that nothing 's what it calls itself!

Devotion, zeal, faith, loyalty — mere love! And, love in question, what may Berthold's be? I did ill to mistrust the world so soon: Already was this Berthold at my side. The valley-level has its hawks no doubt: May not the rock-top have its eagles, too? Yet Valence . . . let me see his rival then!

10

20

ACT V

NIGHT

Scene — The Hall

Enter Berthold and Melchior.

Melchior. And here you wait the matter's issue? Berthold.

Melchior. I don't regret I shut Amelius, then.

But tell me, on this grand disclosure, — how Behaved our spokesman with the forehead?

Berthold.

Oh, Turned out no better than the foreheadless Was dazzled not so very soon, that 's all! For my part, this is scarce the hasty showy Chivalrous measure you give me credit of. Perhaps I had a fancy, — but 't is gone.

— Let her commence the unfriended innocent And carry wrongs about from court to court? No, truly! The least shake of fortune's sand, — My uncle-Pope chokes in a coughing fit, King-cousin takes a fancy to blue eyes, — And wondrously her claims would brighten up; Forth comes a new gloss on the ancient law, O'er-looked provisoes, o'er-past premises, Follow in plenty. No: 't is the safe step. The hour beneath the convent-wall is lost:

Juliers and she, once mine, are ever mine. Melchior. Which is to say, you, losing heart

already,

Elude the adventure.

Berthold. Not so — or, if so — Why not confess at once that I advise None of our kingly craft and guild just now

R. D. -- 12

To lay, one moment, down their privilege
With the notion they can any time at pleasure
Retake it: that may turn out hazardous.
We seem, in Europe, pretty well at end
O' the night, with our great masque: those favored
few

Who keep the chamber's top, and honor's chance 30 Of the early evening, may retain their place And figure as they list till out of breath. But it is growing late: and I observe A dim grim kind of tipstaves at the doorway Not only bar new-comers entering now, But caution those who left, for any cause, And would return, that morning draws too near; The ball must die off, shut itself up. We— I think, may dance lights out and sunshine in, And sleep off headache on our frippery: 40 But friend the other, who cunningly stole out, And, after breathing the fresh air outside, Means to re-enter with a new costume, Will be advised go back to bed, I fear. I stick to privilege, on second thoughts.

Melchior. Yes — you evade the adventure: and,

beside,

Give yourself out for colder than you are.
King Philip, only, notes the lady's eyes?
Don't they come in for somewhat of the motive
With you too?

Berthold. Yes — no: I am past that now. 50 Gone 't is: I cannot shut my soul to fact. Of course, I might by forethought and contrivance Reason myself into a rapture. Gone:

And something better come instead, no doubt.

Melchior. So be it! Yet, all the same, proceed my way,

Though to your ends; so shall you prosper best! The lady, — to be won for selfish ends, — Will be won easier my unselfish . . . call it, Romantic way.

Berthold. Won easier?

Melchior. Will not she? 59
Berthold. There I profess humility without bound:
Ill cannot speed — not I — the Emperor.

Melchior. And I should think the Emperor best

waived,

From your description of her mood and way. You could look, if it pleased you, into hearts; But are too indolent and fond of watching Your own — you know that, for you study it.

Berthold. Had you but seen the orator her friend.

So bold and voluble an hour before,

Abashed to earth at aspect of the change! 69
Make her an Empress? Ah, that changed the
case!

Oh, I read hearts! 'T is for my own behoof, I court her with my true worth: wait the event! I learned my final lesson on that head When years ago, — my first and last essay — Before the priest my uncle could by help Of his superior, raise me from the dirt — Priscilla left me for a Brabant lord Whose cheek was like the topaz on his thumb. I am past illusion on that score.

Melchior. Here comes

The lady —

Berthold. — And there you go. But do not! Give

Another chance to please you! Hear me plead!

Melchior. You'll keep, then, to the lover, to the man?

Enter the Duchess—followed by Adolf and Sabyne and, after an interval, by the Courtiers.

Berthold. Good auspice to our meeting!

The Duchess. May it prove!

- And you, sir, will be Emperor one day?

Berthold. (Ay, that's the point!) I may be Emperor.

The Duchess. 'T is not for my sake only, I am

proud

Of this you offer: I am prouder far That from the highest state should duly spring The highest, since most generous, of deeds.

Berthold. (Generous — still that!) You under-

rate yourself.
You are, what I, to be complete, must gain —
Find now, and may not find, another time.

While I career on all the world for stage, There needs at home my representative.

The Duchess.—Such, rather, would some warriorwoman be—

One dowered with lands and gold, or rich in friends—

One like yourself.

Berthold. Lady, I am myself,

And have all these: I want what 's not myself, Nor has all these. Why give one hand two swords? Here 's one already: be a friend's next gift

A silk glove, if you will — I have a sword.

The Duchess. You love me, then?

Berthold. Your lineage I revere,

Honor your virtue, in your truth believe, Do homage to your intellect, and bow

Before your peerless beauty.

The Duchess. But, for love — Berthold. A further love I do not understand.

Our best course is to say these hideous truths, And see them, once said, grow endurable: Like waters shuddering from their central bed, Black with the midnight bowels of the earth, That, once up-spouted by an earthquake's throe, A portent and a terror — soon subside, Freshen apace, take gold and rainbow hues In sunshine, sleep in shadow, and at last Grow common to the earth as hills or trees — Accepted by all things they came to scare.

The Duchess. You cannot love, then?

Berthold. — Charlemagne, perhaps!

Are you not over-curious in love-lore?

The Duchess. I have become so, very recently. It seems, then, I shall best deserve esteem, 120 Respect, and all your candor promises,

By putting on a calculating mood —

Asking the terms of my becoming yours? Berthold. Let me not do myself injustice, neither.

Because I will not condescend to fictions That promise what my soul can ne'er acquit, It does not follow that my guarded phrase May not include far more of what you seek, Than wide profession of less scrupulous men. You will be Empress, once for all: with me 130 The Pope disputes supremacy — you stand, And none gainsays, the earth's first woman.

The Duchess. That —

Or simple Lady of Ravestein again?

Berthold. The matter 's not in my arbitrament: Now I have made my claims — which I regret — Cede one, cede all.

The Duchess. This claim then, you enforce?

Berthold. The world looks on.

The Duchess. And when must I decide?

Berthold.

Berthold. When, lady? Have I said thus much so promptly For nothing? - Poured out, with such pains, at once What I might else have suffered to ooze forth Droplet by droplet in a lifetime long — For aught less than as prompt an answer, too? All's fairly told now: who can teach you more? The Duchess. I do not see him. I shall ne'er deceive. Berthold. This offer should be made befittingly Did time allow the better setting forth The good of it, with what is not so good, Advantage, and disparagement as well: But as it is, the sum of both must serve. I am already weary of this place; 150 My thoughts are next stage on to Rome. Decide! The Empire — or, — not even Juliers now! Hail to the Empress — farewell to the Duchess! [The Courtiers, who have been drawing nearer and nearer, interpose. Gaucelme. — "Farewell," Prince? when we break in at our risk -Clugnet. Almost upon court-license trespassing-Gaucelme. — To point out how your claims are valid yet! You know not, by the Duke her father's will, The lady, if she weds beneath her rank, Forfeits her Duchy in the next heir's favor — So 't is expressly stipulate. And if 160 It can be shown 't is her intent to wed A subject, then yourself, next heir, by right Succeed to Juliers.

What insanity? —

170

Guibert. Sir, there's one Valence, the pale fiery man

You saw and heard this morning—thought, no doubt.

Was of considerable standing here: I put it to your penetration, Prince,

If aught save love, the truest love for her

Could make him serve the lady as he did! He's simply a poor advocate of Cleves

— Creeps here with difficulty, finds a place

With danger, gets in by a miracle,

And for the first time meets the lady's face —

So runs the story: is that credible?

For, first — no sooner in, than he 's apprised

Fortunes have changed; you are all-powerful here,

The lady as powerless: he stands fast by her!

The Duchess [aside]. And do such deeds spring up from love alone?

Guibert. But here occurs the question, does the lady

Love him again? I say, how else can she? Can she forget how he stood singly forth

In her defence, dared outrage all of us,

Insult yourself — for what, save love's reward.

The Duchess [aside]. And is love then the sole reward of love?

Guibert. But, love him as she may and must—you ask,

Means she to wed him? "Yes," both natures answer!

Both, in their pride, point out the sole result; Naught less would he accept nor she propose.

For each conjecture was she great enough

189

180

— Will be, for this.

Clugnet. Though, now that this is known, Policy, doubtless, urges she deny . . .

The Duchess. — What, sir, and wherefore? —

since I am not sure

That all is any other than you say!
You take this Valence, hold him close to me,
Him with his actions: can I choose but look?
I am not sure, love trulier shows itself
Than in this man, you hate and would degrade,
Yet, with your worst abatement, show me thus.
Nor am I — (thus made look within myself,

In the look is dared —
Sure that I do not love him!

Guibert. Hear you, Prince? Berthold. And what, sirs, please you, may this

prattle mean

Unless to prove with what alacrity You give your lady's secrets to the world? How much indebted, for discovering That quality, you make me, will be found When there's a keeper for my own to seek.

Courtiers. "Our lady?"

Berthold. — She assuredly remains. The Duchess. Ah, Prince — and you too can be generous?

You could renounce your power, if this were so, And let me, as these phrase it, wed my love Yet keep my Duchy? You perhaps exceed Him, even, in disinterestedness!

Berthold. How, lady, should all this affect my

purpose?

Your will and choice are still as ever, free.
Say, you have known a worthier than myself
In mind and heart, of happier form and face—
Others must have their birthright: I have gifts,

To balance theirs, not blot them out of sight.

Against a hundred alien qualities,

I lay the prize I offer. I am nothing:

Wed you the Empire?

The Duchess. And my heart away?

Berthold. When have I made pretension to your heart?

I give none. I shall keep your honor safe;
With mine I trust you, as the sculptor trusts
You marble woman with the marble rose,
Loose on her hand, she never will let fall,
In graceful, slight, silent security.
You will be proud of my world-wide career,
And I content in you the fair and good.
What were the use of planting a few seeds
The thankless climate never would mature—
Affections all repelled by circumstance?
Enough: to these no credit I attach,—
To what you own, find nothing to object.
Write simply on my requisition's face

What shall content my friends — that you admit,

As Colombe of Ravestein, the claims therein,

Or never need admit them, as my wife

And either way, all 's ended!

The Duchess.

Let all end!

Berthold. The requisition!

Guibert. — Valence holds, of course!

Berthold. Desire his presence! [Adolf goes out.

Courtiers [to each other]. Out it all comes yet;

He'll have his word against the bargain yet; He's not the man to tamely acquiesce. One passionate appeal — upbraiding even, May turn the tide again. Despair not yet!

[They retire a little.

Berthold [to Melchior]. The Empire has its old success, my friend!

Melchior. You've had your way: before the

spokesman speaks,

Let me, but this once, work a problem out, And evermore be dumb! The Empire wins? 250 To better purpose have I read my books!

Enter Valence.

Melchior [to the Courtiers]. Apart, my masters! [To Valence.] Sir, one word with you! I am a poor dependent of the Prince's -Pitched on to speak, as of slight consequence. You are no higher, I find: in other words. We two, as probably the wisest here, Need not hold diplomatic talk like fools. Suppose I speak, divesting the plain fact Of all their tortuous phrases, fit for them? Do you reply so, and what trouble saved! 260 The Prince, then — an embroiled strange heap of news

This moment reaches him — if true or false, All dignity forbids he should inquire In person, or by worthier deputy; Yet somehow must inquire, lest slander come: And so, 't is I am pitched on. You have heard His offer to your lady?

Valence. Yes.

Melchior. -- Conceive

Her joy thereat?

Valence. I cannot.

Melchior. No one can.

All draws to a conclusion, therefore. Valence [aside].

So!

No after-judgment — no first thought revised — 270
Her first and last decision! — me, she leaves,
Takes him; a simple heart is flung aside,
The ermine o'er a heartless breast embraced.
Oh Heaven, this mockery has been played too oft!
Once, to surprise the angels — twice, that fiends
Recording, might be proud they chose not so —
Thrice, many thousand times, to teach the world
All men should pause, misdoubt their strength, since
men

Can have such chance yet fail so signally,

— But ever, ever this farewell to Heaven,

Welcome to earth — this taking death for life —

This spurning love and kneeling to the world —

Oh Heaven, it is too often and too old!

Melchior. Well, on this point, what but an absurd

rumor

Arises — these, its source — its subject, you!
Your faith and loyalty misconstruing,
They say, your service claims the lady's hand!
Of course, nor Prince nor lady can respond:
Yet something must be said: for, were it true
You made such claim, the Prince would . . .

Valence.

Well, sir, — would?

Melchior. — Not only probably withdraw his suit,

But, very like, the lady might be forced

Accept your own. Oh, there are reasons why!
But you 'll excuse at present all save one, —
I think so. What we want is, your own witness,

For, or against — her good, or yours: decide!

Valence [aside]. Be it her good if she accounts it

[After a contest.] For what am I but hers, to choose as she?

Who knows how far, beside, the light from her

May reach, and dwell with, what she looks upon? 500 Melchior [to the Prince]. Now to him, you! Berthold [to Valence]. My friend acquaints you, sir,

The noise runs . . .

Valence. — Prince, how fortunate are you, Wedding her as you will, in spite of noise, To show belief in love! Let her but love you, All else you disregard! What else can be? You know how love is incompatible With falsehood — purifies, assimilates All other passions to itself.

Melchior. Ay, sir:

But softly! Where, in the object we select, Such love is, perchance, wanting?

Valence.

Then indeed, 310 What is it you can take? Melchior.

Nay, ask the world! Youth, beauty, virtue, an illustrious name,

An influence o'er mankind.

Valence. When man perceives . . .

— Ah, I can only speak as for myself! The Duchess. Speak for yourself!

Valence.May I? — no, I have spoken,

And time 's gone by. Had I seen such an one,

As I loved her — weighing thoroughly that word —

So should my task be to evolve her love: If for myself! — if for another — well.

Berthold. Heroic truly! And your sole reward, —

The secret pride in yielding up love's right?

Valence. Who thought upon reward? And yet how much

Comes after — oh, what amplest recompense! Is the knowledge of her, naught? the memory, naught?

— Lady, should such an one have looked on you, Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote the world And say, love can go unrequited here!
You will have blessed him to his whole life's end—Low passions hindered, baser cares kept back, 329 All goodness cherished where you dwelt—and dwell. What would he have? He holds you—you, both form

And mind, in his, — where self-love makes such

For love of you, he would not serve you now
The vulgar way, — repulse your enemies,
Win you new realms, or best, to save the old.
Die blissfully — that 's past so long ago!
He wishes you no need, thought, care of him —
Your good, by any means; himself unseen,
Away, forgotten! — He gives that life's task up,
As it were . . . but this charge which I return — 340

[Offers the requisition, which she takes.
Wishing your good.

The Duchess [having subscribed it]. And oppor-

tunely, sir —

Since at a birthday's close, like this of mine, Good wishes gentle deeds reciprocate.

Most on a wedding-day, as mine is too,
Should gifts be thought of: yours comes first by right.
Ask of me!

Berthold. He shall have whate'er he asks,

For your sake and his own.

Valence [aside]. If I should ask—
The withered bunch of flowers she wears — perhaps,
One last touch of her hand, I nevermore
Shall see!

[After a pause, presenting his paper to the Prince. Cleves' Prince, redress the wrongs of Cleves!

Berthold. I will, sir!

The Duchess [as Valence prepares to retire]. —

Nay, do out your duty, first!

You bore this paper; I have registered My answer to it: read it and have done!

[Valence reads it.

360

I take him — give up Juliers and the world.

This is my Birthday.

Melchior. Berthold, my one hero Of the world she gives up, one friend worth my books, Sole man I think it pays the pains to watch,—

Speak, for I know you through your Popes and Kings!

Berthold [after a pause]. Lady, well rewarded!

Sir, as well deserved!

I could not imitate — I hardly envy —

I do admire you. All is for the best.

Too costly a flower were this, I see it now,

To pluck and set upon my barren helm

To wither — any garish plume will do.

I'll not insult you and refuse your Duchy —

You can so well afford to yield it me,

And I were left, without it, sadly lorn.

As it is — for me — if that will flatter you,

A somewhat wearier life seems to remain 369 Than I thought possible where . . . 'faith, their life

Begins already! They 're too occupied

To listen: and few words content me best.

[Abruptly to the Courtiers.] Iam your Duke, though!

Who obey me here?

The Duchess. Adolf and Sabyne follow us —

Guibert [starting from the Courtiers]. — And I.

Do I not follow them, if I may n't you? Shall not I get some little duties up

At Ravestein and emulate the rest?

God save you, Gaucelme! 'T is my Birthday, too!

Berthold. You happy handful that remain with me

I shall leave over you — will earn your wages
Or Dietrich has forgot to ply his trade!
Meantime, — go copy me the precedents
Of every installation, proper styles
And pedigrees of all your Juliers' Dukes —
While I prepare to plod on my old way,
And somewhat wearily, I must confess!

The Duchess [with a light joyous laugh as she turns from them]. Come, Valence, to our friends,

God's earth . . .

Valence [as she falls into his arms]. — And thee!

LURIA

A TRAGEDY

1846

I DEDICATE THIS LAST ATTEMPT FOR THE PRESENT AT DRAMATIC POETRY TO A GREAT DRAMATIC POET;

"WISHING WHAT I WRITE MAY BE READ BY HIS LIGHT:"
IF A PHRASE ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED,

BY NOT THE LEAST WORTHY OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES,
TO SHAKESPEARE,

MAY BE APPLIED HERE, BY ONE WHOSE SOLE PRIVILEGE IS IN A GRATEFUL ADMIRATION,

To WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

LONDON: 1846.

PERSONS

Luria, a Moor, Commander of the Florentine Forces.

Husain, a Moor, his friend.

Puccio, the old Florentine Commander, now Luria's chief officer.

Braccio, Commissary of the Republic of Florence.

JACOPO (LAPO), his secretary.

TIBURZIO, Commander of the Pisans.

Domizia, a noble Florentine lady.

Scene — Luria's Camp between Florence and Pisa.

TIME, 14—

ACT I

MORNING

Braccio, as dictating to his Secretary; Puccio standing by.

Braccio [to Puccio]. Then, you join battle in an

Puccio. Not I;

Luria, the captain.

Braccio [to the Secretary]. "In an hour, the battle."

[To Puccio.] Sir, let your eye run o'er this loose digest.

And see if very much of your report

Have slipped away through my civilian phrase.

Does this instruct the Signory aright

How army stands with army?

Puccio [taking the paper]. All seems here:

— That Luria, seizing with our city's force
The several points of vantage, hill and plain,
Shuts Pisa safe from help on every side,
And, baffling the Lucchese arrived too late,
Must, in the battle he delivers now,
Beat her best troops and first of chiefs.

Braccio. So sure?

Tiburzio's a consummate captain too!

Puccio. Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand.
Braccio [to the Secretary]. "The Signory hold

Pisa in their hand."

Your own proved soldiership 's our warrant, sir: So, while my secretary ends his task, Have out two horsemen, by the open roads,

To post with it to Florence!

Puccio [returning the paper]. All seems here; 20 Unless . . . Ser Braccio, 't is my last report! Since Pisa's outbreak, and my overthrow, And Luria's hastening at the city's call To save her, as he only could, no doubt; Till now that she is saved or sure to be, — Whatever you tell Florence, I tell you: Each day's note you, her Commissary, make Of Luria's movements, I myself supply.

No youngster am I longer, to my cost;
Therefore while Florence gloried in her choice
And vaunted Luria, whom but Luria, still,
As if zeal, courage, prudence, conduct, faith,
Had never met in any man before,
I saw no pressing need to swell the cry.
But now, this last report and I have done:
So, ere to-night comes with its roar of praise,
'T were not amiss if some one old i' the trade
Subscribed with, "True, for once rash counsel's
best.

This Moor of the bad faith and doubtful race,
This boy to whose untried sagacity,
Raw valor, Florence trusts without reserve
The charge to save her, — justifies her choice;
In no point has this stranger failed his friends.
Now praise!" I say this, and it is not here.

Braccio [to the Secretary]. Write, "Puccio, super-

seded in the charge,

By Luria, bears full witness to his worth,
And no reward our Signory can give
Their champion but he 'll back it cheerfully.''
Aught more? Five minutes hence, both messengers!

[Puccio goes.

Braccio [after a pause, and while he slowly tears the paper into shreds]. I think . . . (pray God, I hold in fit contempt

This warfare's noble art and ordering,
And, — once the brace of prizers fairly matched,
Poleaxe with poleaxe, knife with knife as good, —
Spit properly at what men term their skill!—)
Yet here I think our fighter has the odds.
With Pisa's strength diminished thus and thus,
Such points of vantage in our hands and such,
Lucca still off the stage, too, — all 's assured:

Luria must win this battle. Write the Court, That Luria's trial end and sentence pass! 60 Secretary. Patron, — Braccio. Ay, Lapo? Secretary. If you trip, I fall; 'T is in self-interest I speak — Braccio. Nay, nay, You overshoot the mark, my Lapo! Nay! When did I say pure love 's impossible? I make you daily write those red cheeks thin, Load your young brow with what concerns it least, And, when we visit Florence, let you pace The Piazza by my side as if we talked, Where all your old acquaintances may see: You'd die for me, I should not be surprised. 70 Now then! Secretary. Sir, look about and love yourself! Step after step, the Signory and you Tread gay till this tremendous point 's to pass; Which pass not, pass not, ere you ask yourself, — Bears the brain steadily such draughts of fire, Or too delicious may not prove the pride Of this long secret trial you dared plan, Dare execute, you solitary here, With the gray-headed toothless fools at home, Who think themselves your lords, such slaves are they! 80 If they pronounce this sentence as you bid, Declare the treason, claim its penalty, And sudden out of all the blaze of life, On the best minute of his brightest day, From that adoring army at his back,

Thro' Florence' joyous crowds before his face,

Then —

Into the dark you beckon Luria . .

Braccio.

Why, Lapo, when the fighting-people vaunt, We of the other craft and mystery,

May we not smile demure, the danger past? 90 Secretary. Sir, no, no, no, — the danger, and

your spirit

At watch and ward? Where 's danger on your part, With that thin flitting instantaneous steel 'Gainst the blind bull-front of a brute-force world? If Luria, that 's to perish sure as fate, Should have been really guiltless after all?

Braccio. Ah, you have thought that?

Secretary. Here I sit, your scribe,
And in and out goes Luria, days and nights;
This Puccio comes; the Moor his other friend,
Husain; they talk — that 's all feigned easily;
He speaks (I would not listen if I could),
Reads, orders, counsels:—but he rests sometimes,—
I see him stand and eat, sleep stretched an hour
On the lynx-skins yonder; hold his bared black
arms

Into the sun from the tent-opening; laugh
When his horse drops the forage from his teeth
And neighs to hear him hum his Moorish songs.
That man believes in Florence, as the saint
Tied to the wheel believes in God.

Braccio. How strange!

You too have thought that!

Secretary.

Do but you think too,
And all is saved! I only have to write,

"The man seemed false awhile, proves true at last,
Bury it" — so I write the Signory —

"Bury this trial in your breast forever,
Blot it from things or done or dreamed about!
So Luria shall receive his meed to-day

With no suspicion what reverse was near,—

As if no meteoric finger hushed
The doom-word just on the destroyer's lip,
Motioned him off, and let life's sun fall straight."

Braccio [looks to the wall of the tent]. Did he draw
that?

Secretary. With charcoal, when the watch Made the report at midnight; Lady Domizia Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you remember; That is his fancy how a Moorish front Might join to, and complete, the body, — a sketch, — And again where the cloak hangs, yonder in the shadow.

Braccio. He loves that woman.

Secretary. She is sent the spy

Of Florence, — spies on you as you on him: Florence, if only for Domizia's sake,

Is surely safe. What shall I write?

Braccio. I see — 130

A Moorish front, nor of such ill design! Lapo, there's one thing plain and positive;

Man seeks his own good at the whole world's cost.
What? If to lead our troops, stand forth our

chiefs,

And hold our fate, and see us at their beck,
Yet render up the charge when peace return,
Have ever proved too much for Florentines,
Even for the best and bravest of ourselves—
If in the struggle when the soldier's sword
Should sink its point before the statist's pen,
And the calm head replace the violent hand,
Virtue on virtue still have fallen away
Before ambition with unvarying fate,
Till Florence' self at last in bitterness
Be forced to own such falls the natural end,
And, sparing further to expose her sons

To a vain strife and profitless disgrace, Declare, "The foreigner, one not my child, Shall henceforth lead my troops, reach height by

height The glory, then descend into the shame; 150 So shall rebellion be less guilt in him, And punishment the easier task for me:" — If on the best of us such brand she set, Can I suppose an utter alien here, This Luria, our inevitable foe, Confessed a mercenary and a Moor, Born free from many ties that bind the rest Of common faith in Heaven or hope on earth, No past with us, no future, — such a spirit Shall hold the path from which our staunchest broke, Stand firm where every famed precursor fell? My Lapo, I will frankly say, these proofs So duly noted of the man's intent, Are for the doting fools at home, not me. The charges here, they may be true or false: — What is set down? Errors and oversights, A dallying interchange of courtesies With Pisa's General, — all that, hour by hour, Puccio's pale discontent has furnished us, Of petulant speeches, inconsiderate acts, 170 Now overhazard, overcaution now; Even that he loves this lady who believes She outwits Florence, and whom Florence posted By my procurement here, to spy on me, Lest I one minute lose her from my sight — She who remembering her whole House's fall, That nest of traitors strangled in the birth, Now labors to make Luria (poor device As plain) the instrument of her revenge —That she is ever at his ear to prompt 180 Inordinate conceptions of his worth, Exorbitant belief in worth's reward And after, when sure disappointment follows, Proportionable rage at such a wrong — Why, all these reasons, while I urge them most, Weigh with me less than least — as nothing weigh. Upon that broad man's-heart of his, I go: On what I know must be, yet, while I live, Shall never be, because I live and know. Brute-force shall not rule Florence! Intellect 190 May rule her, bad or good as chance supplies: But intellect it shall be, pure if bad, And intellect's tradition so kept up. Till the good come — 't was intellect that ruled, Not brute-force bringing from the battle-field The attributes of wisdom, foresight's graces We lent it there to lure its grossness on; All which it took for earnest and kept safe To show against us in our market-place, Just as the plumes and tags and swordsman's-gear (Fetched from the camp where, at their foolish best, When all was done they frightened nobody) Perk in our faces in the street, forsooth, With our own warrant and allowance. No! The whole procedure's overcharged, — its end In too strict keeping with the bad first step. To conquer Pisa was sheer inspiration? Well then, to perish for a single fault, Let that be simple justice! There, my Lapo! A Moorish front ill suits our Duomo's body: 210 Blot it out — and bid Luria's sentence come! [Luria, who, with Domizia, has entered observed at the close of the last phrase, now advances. Luria. And Luria, Luria, what of Luria now?

Braccio. Ah, you so close, sir? Lady Domizia too? I said it needs must be a busy moment For one like you: that you were now i' the thick Of your duties, doubtless, while we idlers sat . . . Luria. No — in that paper, — it was in that paper What you were saying! Oh — my day's despatch! Braccio. I censure you to Florence: will you see? Luria. See your despatch, your last, for the first time? Well, if I should, now? For in truth, Domizia, He would be forced to set about another, In his sly cool way, the true Florentine, To mention that important circumstance. So, while he wrote I should gain time, such time! Do not send this! Braccio. And wherefore? Luria. These Lucchese Are not arrived — they never will arrive! And I must fight to-day, arrived or not, And I shall beat Tiburzio, that is sure: And then will be arriving his Lucchese, 230 But slowly, oh so slowly, just in time To look upon my battle from the hills, Like a late moon, of use to nobody! And I must break my battle up, send forth, Surround on this side, hold in check on that. Then comes to-morrow, we negotiate, You make me send for fresh instructions home, — Incompleteness, incompleteness! Braccio. Ah, we scribes!

Why, I had registered that very point,
The non-appearance of our foes' ally,
As a most happy fortune; both at once

Were formidable: singly faced, each falls.

Luria. So, no great battle for my Florentines!
No crowning deed, decisive and complete,
For all of them, the simple as the wisc,
Old, young, alike, that do not understand
Our wearisome pedantic art of war,
By which we prove retreat may be success,
Delay — best speed, — half loss, at times, — whole

They want results: as if it were their fault! And you, with warmest wish to be my friend,

Will not be able now to simply say

"Your servant has performed his task — enough!

You ordered, he has executed: good! Now walk the streets in holiday attire,

Congratulate your friends, till noon strikes fierce,

Then form bright groups beneath the Duomo's shade!"

No, you will have to argue and explain, Persuade them, all is not so ill in the end,

Tease, tire them out! Arrive, arrive, Lucchese! 260 Domizia. Well, you will triumph for the past

enough,

Whatever be the present chance; no service Falls to the ground with Florence: she awaits Her saviour, will receive him fittingly.

Luria. Ah Braccio, you know Florence! Will

she, think you,

Receive one . . . what means "fittingly receive"?

— Receive compatriots, doubtless — I am none:

And yet Domizia promises so much!

Braccio. Kind women still give men a woman's prize.

I know not o'er which gate most boughs will arch, Nor if the Square will wave red flags or blue. I should have judged, the fullest of rewards Our state gave Luria, when she made him chief Of her whole force, in her best captain's place.

Luria. That, my reward? Florence on my ac-

count.

Relieved Ser Puccio? — mark you, my reward! And Puccio's having all the fight's true joy — Goes here and there, gets close, may fight, himself, While I must order, stand aloof, o'ersee. That was my calling, there was my true place! 280 I should have felt, in some one over me, Florence impersonate, my visible head, As I am over Puccio, — taking life Directly from her eye! They give me you:

But do you cross me, set me half to work? I enjoy nothing — though I will, for once!

Decide, shall we join battle? may I wait?

Braccio. Let us compound the matter; wait till noon:

Then, no arrival, —

Ah, noon comes too fast! Luria. I wonder, do you guess why I delay 290 Involuntarily the final blow As long as possible? Peace follows it! Florence at peace, and the calm studious heads Come out again, the penetrating eyes; As if a spell broke, all 's resumed, each art You boast, more vivid that it slept awhile. 'Gainst the glad heaven, o'er the white palace-front The interrupted scaffold climbs anew; The walls are peopled by the painter's brush; The statue to its niche ascends to dwell. 300 The present noise and trouble have retired And left the eternal past to rule once more; You speak its speech and read its records plain,

Greece lives with you, each Roman breathes your friend:

But Luria — where will then be Luria's place?

Domizia. Highest in honor, for that past's own sake,

Of which his actions, sealing up the sum By saving all that went before from wreck,

Will range as part, with which be worshipped too.

Luria. Then I may walk and watch you in your

streets,

Lead the smooth life my rough life helps no more, So different, so new, so beautiful —
Nor fear that you will tire to see parade
The club that slew the lion, now that crooks
And shepherd-pipes come into use again?
For very lone and silent seems my East
In its drear vastness: still it spreads, and still
No Braccios, no Domizias anywhere —
Not evermore! Well, well, to-day is ours!

Domizia [to Braccio]. Should he not have been one of us?

Luria. Oh, no!

Not one of you, and so escape the thrill
Of coming into you, of changing thus,—
Feeling a soul grow on me that restricts
The boundless unrest of the savage heart!
The sea heaves up, hangs loaded o'er the land,
Breaks there and buries its tumultuous strength;
Horror, and silence, and a pause awhile:
Lo, inland glides the gulf-stream, miles away,
In rapture of assent, subdued and still,

Neath those strange banks, those unimagined skies.

Well, 't is not sure the quiet lasts forever!
Your placed heads still find rough hands new work;

Some minute's chance — there comes the need of mine:

And, all resolved on, I too hear at last.
Oh, you must find some use for me, Ser Braccio!
You hold my strength; 't were best dispose of it:
What you created, see that you find food for —
I shall be dangerous else!

Braccio. How dangerous, sir?
Luria. There are so many ways, Domizia warns

me,

And one with half the power that I possess,

— Grow very formidable. Do you doubt?

When find a label the label to the content of the label the label to the label to the label to the label the label to the label t

Why, first, who holds the army . . .

Domizia. While we talk, Morn wears; we keep you from your proper place, The field.

Luria. Nay, to the field I move no more;
My part is done, and Puccio's may begin:
I cannot trench upon his province longer
With any face. — You think yourselves so safe?
Why, see — in concert with Tiburzio, now —
One could . . .

Domizia. A trumpet!

Luria. My Lucchese at last! Arrived, as sure as Florence stands! Your leave! 350 [Springs out.

Domizia. How plainly is true greatness charactered

By such unconscious sport as Luria's here, Strength sharing least the secret of itself! Be it with head that schemes or hand that acts, Such save the world which none but they could save, Yet think whate'er they did, that world could do.

Braccio. Yes: and how worthy note, that these

same great ones

In hand or head, with such unconsciousness
And all its due entailed humility,
Should never shrink, so far as I perceive,
From taking up whatever tool there be
Effects the whole world's safety or mishap,
Into their mild hands as a thing of course!
The statist finds it natural to lead
The mob who might as easily lead him—
The captain marshals troops born skilled in war—
Statist and captain verily believe!
While we poor scribes . . . you catch me thinking
now,

That I shall in this very letter write
What none of you are able! To it, Lapo! 370
[Domizia goes.

This last worst all-affected childish fit
Of Luria's, this be-praised unconsciousness,
Convinces me; the past was no child's play:
It was a man beat Pisa, — not a child.
All 's mere dissimulation — to remove
The fear, he best knows we should entertain.
The utmost danger was at hand. Is 't written?
Now make a duplicate, lest this should fail,
And speak your fullest on the other side.

Secretary. I noticed he was busily repairing a My half-effacement of his Duomo sketch, And, while he spoke of Florence, turned to it, As the Mage Negro king to Christ the babe. I judge his childishness the mere relapse To boyhood of a man who has worked lately, And presently will work, so, meantime, plays: Whence, more than ever I believe in him.

Braccio [after a pause]. The sword! At best, the soldier, as he says,

In Florence — the black face, the barbarous name,

390

For Italy to boast her show of the age, Her man of men! To Florence with each letter!

ACT II

NOON

Domizia. Well, Florence, shall I reach thee, pierce thy heart

Thro' all its safeguards? Hate is said to help — Quicken the eye, invigorate the arm: And this my hate, made up of many hates, Might stand in scorn of visible instrument, And will thee dead: yet do I trust it not. Nor man's devices nor Heaven's memory Of wickedness forgot on earth so soon, But thy own nature, — hell and thee I trust, To keep thee constant in that wickedness, Where my revenge may meet thee. Turn aside A single step, for gratitude or shame, — Grace but this Luria, — this wild mass of rage I have prepared to launch against thee now,— With other payment than thy noblest found,— Give his desert for once its due reward, And past thee would my sure destruction roll. But thou, who mad'st our House thy sacrifice, It cannot be thou wilt except this Moor From the accustomed fate of zeal and truth: 20 Thou wilt deny his looked-for recompense, And then — I reach thee. Old and trained, my sire Could bow down on his quiet broken heart, Die awe-struck and submissive, when at last The strange blow came for the expected wreath; And Porzio passed in blind bewilderment To exile, never to return, — they say,

Perplexed in his frank simple honest soul, As if some natural law had changed, — how else Could Florence, on plain fact pronouncing thus, Judge Porzio's actions worthy such reward? But Berto, with the ever-passionate pulse, — Oh that long night, its dreadful hour on hour, In which no way of getting his fair fame From their inexplicable charges free, Was found, save pouring forth the impatient blood To show its color whether false or no! My brothers never had a friend like me Close in their need to watch the time, then speak, 39 — Burst with a wakening laughter on their dream, Cry, "Florence was all falseness, so, false here!" And show them what a simple task remained — To leave dreams, rise, and punish in God's name The city wedded to the wickedness. None stood by them as I by Luria stand. So, when the stranger cheated of his due Turns on thee as his rapid nature bids, Then, Florence, think, a hireling at thy throat For the first outrage, think who bore thy last, Yet mutely in forlorn obedience died! 50 He comes — his friend — black faces in the camp Where moved those peerless brows and eyes of old.

Enter Luria and Husain.

Domizia. Well, and the movement — is it as you hope?

'T is Lucca?

Luria. Ah, the Pisan trumpet merely! Tiburzio's envoy, I must needs receive.

Domizia. Whom I withdraw before; tho' if I lingered

You could not wonder, for my time fleets fast.
The overtaking night brings such reward!
And where will then be room for me? Yet, praised,
Remember who was first to promise praise,
And envy those who also can perform!

[Goes.]

Luria. This trumpet from the Pisans?—
Husain. In the camp;

A very noble presence — Braccio's visage On Puccio's body — calm and fixed and good; A·man I seem as I had seen before: Most like, it was some statue had the face.

Luria. Admit him! This will prove the last delay. Husain. Ay, friend, go on, and die thou going

on!

Thou heardst what the grave woman said but now:
To-night rewards thee. That is well to hear; 70

But stop not therefore: hear it, and go on!

Luria. Oh, their reward and triumph and the rest They round me in the ears with, all day long? All that, I never take for earnest, friend! Well would it suit us, — their triumphal arch Or storied pillar, — thee and me, the Moors! But gratitude in those Italian eyes — That, we shall get?

Husain. It is too cold an air. Our sun rose out of yonder mound of mist: Where is he now? So, I trust none of them.

Luria. Truly?

Husain. I doubt and fear. There stands a wall 'Twixt our expansive and explosive race And those absorbing, concentrating men.

80

They use thee.

Luria. And I feel it, Husain! yes, And care not — yes, an alien force like mine Is only called to play its part outside

Their different nature; where its sole use seems
To fight with and keep off an adverse force,
As alien, — which repelled, mine too withdraws:
Inside, they know not what to do with me.
Thus I have told them laughingly and oft,
But long since am prepared to learn the worst.

Husain. What is the worst?

Luria. I will forestall them, Husain, Will speak the destiny they dare not speak—Banish myself before they find the heart. I will be first to say, "The work rewards! I know, for all your praise, my use is over, So may it prove!— meanwhile 't is best I go, Go earry safe my memories of you all To other scenes of action, newer lands."—

Thus leaving them confirmed in their belief They would not easily have tired of me. You think this hard to say?

Husain. Say or not say, So thou but go, so they but let thee go! This hating people, that hate each the other. And in one blandness to us Moors unite— Locked each to each like slippery snakes, I say, Which still in all their tangles, hissing tongue And threatening tail, ne'er do each other harm; While any ereature of a better blood, 110 They seem to fight for, while they eircle safe And never touch it, — pines without a wound, Withers away beside their eyes and breath. See thou, if Puceio eome not safely out Of Braecio's grasp, this Braeeio sworn his foe, As Braceio safely from Domizia's toils Who hates him most! Be thou, the friend of all, . . Come out of them!

Luria. The Pisan trumpet now!

Husain. Breathe free—it is an enemy, no friend! [Goes.

Luria. He keeps his instincts, no new culture mars

Their perfect use in him; just so the brutes Rest not, are anxious without visible cause, When change is in the elements at work, Which man's trained senses fail to apprehend. But here, — he takes the distant chariot wheel For thunder, festal flame for lightning's flash, The finer traits of cultivated life For treachery and malevolence: I see!

Enter Tiburzio.

Luria. Quick, sir, your message! I but wait

your message

To sound the charge. You bring no overture
For truce? I would not, for your General's sake,
You spoke of truce: a time to fight is come,
And, whatsoe'er the fight's event, he keeps
His honest soldier's-name to beat me with,
Or leaves me all himself to beat, I trust!

Tiburzio. I am Tiburzio.

Luria. You? 'T is — yes . . . Tiburzio! You were the last to keep the ford i' the valley From Puccio, when I threw in succors there! Why, I was on the heights — through the defile Ten minutes after, when the prey was lost! 146 You wore an open skull-cap with a twist Of water-reeds — the plume being hewn away; While I drove down my battle from the heights, I saw with my own eyes!

Tiburzio. And you are Luria Who sent my cohort, that laid down its arms

170

In error of the battle-signal's sense,
Back safely to me at the critical time —
One of a hundred deeds. I know you. Therefore
To none but you could I . . .

Luria. No truce, Tiburzio! Tiburzio. Luria, you know the peril imminent 150

On Pisa, — that you have us in the toils,
Us her last safeguard, all that intercepts
The rage of her implacablest of foes
From Pisa: if we fall to-day, she falls.
Tho' Lucca will arrive, yet, 't is too late.
You have so plainly here the best of it,
That you must feel, brave soldier as you are,
How dangerous we grow in this extreme,
How truly formidable by despair.
Still, probabilities should have their weight:
The extreme chance is ours, but, that chance failing,
You win this battle. Wherefore say I this?
To be well apprehended when I add,
This danger absolutely comes from you.
Were you who threaten thus a Florentine

Were you, who threaten thus, a Florentine . . . Luria. Sir, I am nearer Florence than her sons.

I can, and have perhaps obliged the State,

Nor paid a mere son's duty.

Tiburzio. Even so.

Were you the son of Florence, yet endued
With all your present nobleness of soul,
No question, what I must communicate

Would not detach you from her.

Luria. Me, detach?
Tiburzio. Time urges. You will ruin presently
Pisa, you never knew, for Florence' sake
You think you know. I have from time to time
Made prize of certain secret missives sent
From Braccio here, the Commissary, home:

And knowing Florence otherwise, I piece The entire chain out, from these its scattered links. Your trial occupies the Signory; They sit in judgment on your conduct now. When men at home inquire into the acts Which in the field e'en foes appreciate . . . Brief, they are Florentines! You, saving them, Seek but the sure destruction saviours find.

Luria. Tiburzio!

All the wonder is of course. Tiburzio. I am not here to teach you, nor direct, Only to loyally apprise — scarce that. This is the latest letter, sealed and safe, As it left here an hour ago. One way 190 Of two thought free to Florence, I command. The duplicate is on its road; but this, -Read it, and then I shall have more to say.

Luria. Florence!

Now, were yourself a Florentine, Tiburzio. This letter, let it hold the worst it can, Would be no reason you should fall away. The mother city is the mother still, And recognition of the children's service Her own affair; reward — there 's no reward! But you are bound by quite another tie. 200 Nor nature shows, nor reason, why at first A foreigner, born friend to all alike, Should give himself to any special State More than another, stand by Florence' side Rather than Pisa; 't is as fair a city You war against as that you fight for — famed As well as she in story, graced no less With noble heads and patriotic hearts: Nor to a stranger's eye would either cause, Stripped of the cumulative loves and hates

210

240

Which take importance from familiar view, Stand as the right and sole to be upheld. Therefore, should the preponderating gift Of love and trust, Florence was first to throw, Which made you hers, not Pisa's, void the scale, -Old ties dissolving, things resume their place And all begins again. Break seal and read! At least let Pisa offer for you now! And I, as a good Pisan, shall rejoice— Though for myself I lose, in gaining you, 220 This last fight and its opportunity; The chance it brings of saving Pisa yet, Or in the turn of battle dying so That shame should want its extreme bitterness. Luria. Tiburzio, you that fight for Pisa now As I for Florence . . . say my chance were yours! You read this letter, and you find . . . no, no! Too mad! Tiburzio. I read the letter, find they purpose When I have crushed their foe, to crush me: well? 229 Luria. You, being their captain, what is it you do? Tiburzio. Why, as it is, all cities are alike; As Florence pays you, Pisa will pay me. I shall be as belied, whate'er the event, As you, or more: my weak head, they will say, Prompted this last expedient, my faint heart Entailed on them indelible disgrace, Both which defects ask proper punishment. Another tenure of obedience, mine! You are no son of Pisa's: break and read! Luria. And act on what I read? What act were fit?

If the firm-fixed foundation of my faith In Florence, who to me stands for mankind, — If that break up and, disimprisoning

From the abyss . . . Ah friend, it cannot be!
You may be very sage, yet — all the world
Having to fail, or your sagacity,
You do not wish to find yourself alone!
What would the world be worth? Whose love be sure?

The world remains: you are deceived!

Tiburzio.

Your hand!

250

259

I lead the vanguard. — If you fall, beside, The better: I am left to speak! For me, This was my duty, nor would I rejoice If I could help, it misses its effect; And after all you will look gallantly

Found dead here with that letter in your breast.

Luria. Tiburzio — I would see these people once

And test them ere I answer finally!

At your arrival let the trumpet sound: If mine return not then the wonted cry

It means that I believe — am Pisa's!

grace,

Tiburzio. Well! [Goes. Luria. My heart will have it he speaks true! My

Bcats close to this Tiburzio as a friend.

If he had stept into my watch-tent, night
And the wild desert full of foes around,
I should have broke the bread and given the salt
Secure, and, when my hour of watch was done,
Taken my turn to sleep between his knees,
Safe in the untroubled brow and honest cheek.
Oh world, where all things pass and naught abides,
Oh life, the long mutation — is it so?

Is it with life as with the body's change?
— Where, e'en tho' better follow, good must pass,
Nor manhood's strength can mate with boyhood's

Nor age's wisdom, in its turn, find strength, But silently the first gift dies away, And though the new stays, never both at once. Life's time of savage instinct o'er with me, It fades and dies away, past trusting more, As if to punish the ingratitude With which I turned to grow in these new lights, 280 And learned to look with European eyes. Yet it is better, this cold certain way, Where Braccio's brow tells nothing, Puccio's mouth, Domizia's eyes reject the searcher: yes! For on their calm sagacity I lean, Their sense of right, deliberate choice of good, Sure, as they know my deeds, they deal with me. Yes, that is better — that is best of all! Such faith stays when mere wild belief would go. Yes — when the desert creature's heart, at fault 290 Amid the scattering tempest's pillared sands, Betrays its step into the pathless drift — The calm instructed evc of man holds fast By the sole bearing of the visible star, Sure that when slow the whirling wreck subside, The boundaries, lost now, shall be found again, — The palm-trees and the pyramid over all. Yes: I trust Florence: Pisa is deceived.

Enter Braccio, Puccio, and Domizia.

Braccio. Noon's at an end: no Lucca? You must fight.

Luria. Do you remember ever, gentle friends, 300

I am no Florentine?

Domizia. It is yourself Who still are forcing us, importunately, To bear in mind what else we should forget.

Luria. For loss! — for what I lose in being none! No shrewd man, such as you yourselves respect, But would remind you of the stranger's loss In natural friends and advocates at home, Hereditary loves, even rivalships With precedent for honor and reward. Still, there 's a gain, too! If you take it so, 310 The stranger's lot has special gain as well. Do you forget there was my own far East I might have given away myself to, once, As now to Florence, and for such a gift, Stood there like a descended deity? There, worship waits us: what is it waits here?

Shows the letter.

See! Chance has put into my hand the means Of knowing what I earn, before I work. Should I fight better, should I fight the worse, With payment palpably before me? See! 320 Here lies my whole reward! Best learn it now Or keep it for the end's entire delight?

Braccio. If you serve Florence as the vulgar serve, For swordsman's-pay alone, — break seal and read!

In that ease, you will find your full desert.

Luria. Give me my one last happy moment, friends!

You need me now, and all the graeiousness This letter can contain will hardly balance The after-feeling that you need no more. 329 This moment . . . oh, the East has use with you! Its sword still flashes — is not flung aside With the past praise, in a dark eorner yet! How say you? 'T is not so with Florentines, Captains of yours: for them, the ended war Is but a first step to the peace begun: He who did well in war, just earns the right

To begin doing well in peace, you know:
And certain my precursors, — would not such
Look to themselves in such a chance as mine,
Secure the ground they trod upon, perhaps?
For I have heard, by fits, or seemed to hear,
Of strange mishap, mistake, ingratitude,
Treachery even. Say that one of you
Surmised this letter carried what might turn
To harm hereafter, cause him prejudice:
What would he do?

Domizia [hastily]. Thank God and take revenge! Hurl her own force against the city straight! And, even at the moment when the foe

Sounded defiance.

[Tiburzio's trumpet sounds in the distance.

Luria. Ah, you Florentines!

So would you do? Wisely for you, no doubt. 350

My simple Moorish instinct bids me clench

The obligation you relieve me from,

Still deeper! [To Puccio.] Sound our answer, I

should say,
And thus: — [tearing the paper.] — The battle!

That solves every doubt.

ACT III

AFTERNOON

Puccio, as making a report to Jacopo.

Puccio. And here, your captain must report the rest:

For, as I say, the main engagement over And Luria's special part in it performed, How could a subaltern like me expect Leisure or leave to occupy the field And glean what dropped from his wide harvesting? I thought, when Lucca at the battle's end Came up, just as the Pisan centre broke, That Luria would detach me and prevent The flying Pisans seeking what they found, 10 Friends in the rear, a point to rally by. But no, more honorable proved my post! I had the august captive to escort Safe to our camp; some other could pursue, Fight, and be famous; gentler chance was mine—Tiburzio's wounded spirit must be soothed! He 's in the tent there.

Jacopo. Is the substance down? I write — "The vanguard beaten and both wings In full retreat, Tiburzio prisoner" — 19 And now, — "That they fell back and formed again On Lucca's coming." Why then, after all, "T is half a victory, no conclusive one?

Puccio. Two operations where a sole had served.

Jacopo. And Luria's fault was —?

Puccio. Oh, for fault — not much!

He led the attack, a thought impetuously,

— There's commonly more prudence; now, he seemed

To hurry measures, otherwise well judged. By over-concentrating strength at first Against the enemy's van, both wings escaped: That 's reparable, yet it is a fault.

Enter Braccio.

30

Jacopo. As good as a full victory to Florence, With the advantage of a fault beside — What is it, Puccio? — that by pressing forward With too impetuous . . .

Braccio. The report anon! Thanks, sir — you have elsewhere a charge, I know. [Puccio goes.

There's nothing done but I would do again; Yet, Lapo, it may be the past proves nothing, And Luria has kept faithful to the close.

Jacopo. I was for waiting.

Yes: so was not I. Braccio. He could not choose but tear that letter — true! 40 Still, certain of his tones, I mind, and looks: You saw, too, with a fresher soul than I. So, Porzio seemed an injured man, they say! Well, I have gone upon the broad, sure ground.

Enter Luria, Puccio, and Domizia.

Luria [to Puccio]. Say, at his pleasure I will see Tiburzio!

All's at his pleasure.

Domizia [to Luria]. Were I not forewarned You would reject, as you do constantly, Praise, — I might tell you how you have deserved Of Florence by this last and crowning feat: But words offend.

Nay, you may praise me now. 50 Luria. I want instruction every hour, I find, On points where once I saw least need of it; And praise, I have been used to slight perhaps, Seems scarce so easily dispensed with now. After a battle half one's strength is gone; The glorious passion in us once appeased, Our reason's calm cold dreadful voice begins. All justice, power and beauty scarce appear Monopolized by Florence, as of late, To me, the stranger: you, no doubt, may know

60

Why Pisa needs must bear her rival's yoke.
And peradventure I grow nearer you,
For I, too, want to know and be assured.
When a cause ceases to reward itself,
Its friend seeks fresh sustainments; praise is one,
And here stand you — you, lady, praise me well.
But yours — (your pardon) — is unlearned praise.
To the motive, the endeavor, the heart's self,
Your quick sense looks: you crown and call aright
The soul o' the purpose, ere 't is shaped as act,
Takes flesh i' the world, and clothes itself a king.
But when the act comes, stands for what 't is worth,
— Here's Puccio, the skilled soldier, he 's my judge!
Was all well, Puccio?

Puccio. All was . . . must be well:

If we beat Lucca presently, as doubtless . . .

— No, there's no doubt, we must — all was well done.

Luria. In truth? Still you are of the trade, my Puccio!

You have the fellow-craftsman's sympathy. There's none cares, like a fellow of the craft, For the all-unestimated sum of pains 80 That go to a success the world can see: They praise then, but the best they never know — While you know! So, if envy mix with it, Hate even, still the bottom-praise of all, Whatever be the dregs, that drop's pure gold! — For nothing's like it; nothing else records Those daily, nightly drippings in the dark Of the heart's blood, the world lets drop away Forever — so, pure gold that praise must be! And I have yours, my soldier! yet the best 90 Is still to come. There 's one looks on apart Whom all refers to, failure or success;

What 's done might be our best, our utmost work, And yet inadequate to serve his need.

Here's Braccio now, for Florence — here's our

service —

Well done for us, seems it well done for him? His chosen engine, tasked to its full strength Answers the end? Should he have chosen higher? Do we help Florence, now our best is wrought? Braccio. This battle, with the foregone services,

Saves Florence.

Why then, all is very well! Luria. Here am I in the middle of my friends, Who know me and who love me, one and all. And yet . . . 't is like . . . this instant while I speak

Is like the turning-moment of a dream When . . . Ah, you are not foreigners like me! Well then, one always dreams of friends at home; And always comes, I say, the turning-point When something changes in the friendly eyes That love and look on you . . . so slight, so slight . . . And yet it tells you they are dead and gone, Or changed and enemies, for all their words, And all is mockery and a maddening show. You now, so kind here, all you Florentines, What is it in your eyes . . . those lips, those

Nobody spoke it, yet I know it well! Come now — this battle saves you, all 's at end, Your use of me is o'er, for good, for ill, -Come now, what 's done against me, while I speak, In Florence? Come! I feel it in my blood, 120 My eyes, my hair, a voice is in my cars That spite of all this smiling and soft speech You are betraying me. What is it you do?

Have it your way, and think my use is over — Think you are saved and may throw off the mask -Have it my way, and think more work remains Which I could do, — so, show you fear me not! Or prudent be, or daring, as you choose, But tell me — tell what I refused to know At noon, lest heart should fail me! Well? That letter? 130 My fate is sealed at Florence! What is it? Braccio. Sir, I shall not deny what you divine. It is no novelty for innocence To be suspected, but a privilege: The after certain compensation comes. Charges, I say not whether false or true, Have been preferred against you some time since, Which Florence was bound, plainly, to receive, And which are therefore undergoing now The due investigation. That is all. 140 I doubt not but your innocence will prove Apparent and illustrious, as to me, To them this evening, when the trial ends. Luria. My trial? Domizia. Florence, Florence to the end, My whole heart thanks thee! Puccio [to Braccio]. What is "trial," sir?

It was not for a trial — surely, no —

I furnished you those notes from time to time?

I held myself aggrieved — I am a man —

And I might speak, — ay, and speak mere truth, too,

150

And yet not mean at bottom of my heart What should assist a — trial, do you say? You should have told me!

Domizia. Nay, go on, go on! His sentence! Do they sentence him? What is it?

The block — wheel?

Braccio. Sentence there is none as yet,
Nor shall I give my own opinion now
Of what it should be, or is like to be.

When it is passed, applaud or disapprove!
Up to that point, what is there to impugn?

There are right, then, to try me?

Luria. They are right, then, to try me?

Braccio. I assert,

Maintain and justify the absolute right
Of Florence to do all she can have done
In this procedure, — standing on her guard,
Receiving even services like yours
With utmost fit suspicious wariness.

In other matters, keep the mummery up! Take all the experiences of all the world,

Each knowledge that broke through a heart to life, Each reasoning which, to reach, burnt out a brain,

— In other cases, know these, warrant these,

And then dispense with these — 't is very well! 170 Let friend trust friend, and love demand love's like,

And gratitude be claimed for benefits, —

There's grace in that, — and when the fresh heart

breaks,
The new brain proves a ruin, what of them?
Where is the matter of one moth the more
Singed in the candle, at a summer's cnd?
But Florence is no simple John or James
To have his toy, his fancy, his conceit
That he 's the one excepted man by fate,
And, when fate shows him he 's mistaken there, 180

And, when fate shows him he 's mistaken there, 180 Die with all good men's praise, and yield his place To Paul and George intent to try their chance!

Florence exists because these pass away. She 's a contrivance to supply a type Of man, which men's deficiencies refuse;

She binds so many, that she grows out of them—Stands steady o'er their numbers, though they change

And pass away — there 's always what upholds,
Always enough to fashion the great show.
As see, you hanging city, in the sun,
Of shapely cloud substantially the same!
A thousand vapors rise and sink again,
Are interfused, and live their life and die,
Yet ever hangs the steady show i' the air,
Under the sun's straight influence: that is well,
That is worth heaven should hold, and God should bless!

And so is Florence, — the unseen sun above, Which draws and holds suspended all of us, Binds transient vapors into a single cloud Differing from each and better than they all.

And shall she dare to stake this permanence On any one man's faith? Man's heart is weak, And its temptations many: let her prove Each servant to the very uttermost Before she grant him her reward, I say!

Domizia. And as for hearts she chances to mistake,

Wronged hearts, not destined to receive reward, Though they deserve it, did she only know,

What should she do for these?

Braccio. What does she not? Say, that she gives them but herself to serve! 210

Here 's Luria — what had profited his strength When half an hour of sober fancying Had shown him step by step the usclessness Of strength exerted for strength's proper sake? But the truth is, she did create that strength, Draw to the end the corresponding means.

The world is wide — are we the only men? Oh, for the time, the social purpose sake, Use words agreed on, bandy epithets, Call any man the sole great wise and good! 220 But shall we therefore, standing by ourselves. Insult our souls and God with the same speech? There, swarm the ignoble thousands under him: What marks us from the hundreds and the tens? Florence took up, turned all one way the soul Of Luria with its fires, and here he glows! She takes me out of all the world as him, Fixing my eoldness till like iee it eheeks The fire! So, Braeeio, Luria, which is best? 229 Luria. Ah, brave me? And is this indeed the way To gain your good word and sineere esteem? Am I the baited animal that must turn And fight his baiters to deserve their praise? Obedienee is mistake then? Be it so! Do you indeed remember I stand here The eaptain of the eonquering army, — mine — With all your tokens, praise and promise, ready · To show for what their names meant when you gave, Not what you style them now you take away? If I eall in my troops to arbitrate, 240 And dash the first enthusiastic thrill Of victory with this you menaee now — Commend to the instinctive popular sense, My story first, your comment afterward, — Will they take, think you, part with you or me? If I say — I, the laborer they saw work, Ending my work, ask pay, and find my lords Have all this while provided silently Against the day of pay and proving faith, 249 By what you eall my sentence that 's to come -Will friends advise I wait eomplacently?

If I meet Florence half way at their head, What will you do, my mild antagonist?

Braccio. I will rise up like fire, proud and tri-

umphant

That Florence knew you thoroughly and by me, And so was saved. "See, Italy," I'll say, "The crown of our precautions! Here's a man Was far advanced, just touched on the belief Less subtle cities had accorded long; But we were wiser: at the end comes this!"

And from that minute, where is Luria? Lost! The very stones of Florence cry against The all-exacting, naught-enduring fool Who thus resents her first probation, flouts As if he, only, shone and cast no shade, He, only, walked the earth with privilege Against suspicion, free where angels fear: He, for the first inquisitive mother's-word, Must turn, and stand on his defence, forsooth! Reward? You will not be worth punishment! 270

Luria. And Florence knew me thus! Thus I

have lived, —

And thus you, with the clear fine intellect,
Braccio, the cold acute instructed mind,
Out of the stir, so calm and unconfused,
Reported me — how could you otherwise!
Ay? — and what dropped from you, just now, moreover?

Your information, Puccio? — Did your skill,
Your understanding sympathy approve
Such a report of me? Was this the end?
Or is even this the end? Can I stop here?
You, lady, with the woman's stand apart,
The heart to see with, past man's brain and eyes,
. . . I cannot fathom why you should destroy

The unoffending one, you call your friend — Still, lessoned by the good examples here Of friendship, 't is but natural I ask — Had you a further aim, in aught you urged, Than your friend's profit — in all those instances Of perfidy, all Florence wrought of wrong — All I remember now for the first time? 290 Domizia. I am a daughter of the Traversari, Sister of Porzio and of Berto both, So, have foreseen all that has come to pass. I knew the Florence that could doubt their faith, Must needs mistrust a stranger's — dealing them Punishment, would deny him his reward. And I believed, the shame they bore and died, He would not bear, but live and fight against— Seeing he was of other stuff than they. Luria. Hear them! All these against one foreigner! And all this while, where is, in the whole world, To his good faith a single witness? Tiburzio [who has entered unseen during the preceding dialogue]. Here! Thus I bear witness, not in word but deed. I live for Pisa; she 's not lost to-day By many chances — much prevents from that! Her army has been beaten, I am here, But Lucca comes at last, one happy chance! I rather would see Pisa three times lost Than saved by any traitor, even by you; The example of a traitor's happy fortune 310 Would bring more evil in the end than good; -Pisa rejects the traitor, craves yourself! I, in her name, resign forthwith to you My charge, — the highest office, sword and shield!

You shall not, by my counsel, turn on Florence

Your army, give her calumny that ground—
Nor bring one soldier: be you all we gain!
And all she 'll lose,— a head to deck some bridge,
And save the cost o' the crown should deck the head.
Leave her to perish in her perfidy,
Plague-stricken and stripped naked to all eyes,
A proverb and by-word in all mouths!
Go you to Pisa! Florence is my place—
Leave me to tell her of the rectitude,
I, from the first, told Pisa, knowing it.
To Pisa!

Domizia. Ah my Braccio, are you caught?
Braccio. Puccio, good soldier and good citizen,
Whom I have ever kept beneath my eye,
Ready as fit, to serve in this event
Florence, who clear foretold it from the first — 330
Through me, she gives you the command and charge
She takes, through me, from him who held it late!
A painful trial, very sore, was yours:
All that could draw out, marshal in array
The selfish passions 'gainst the public good —
Slights, scorns, neglects, were heaped on you to
bear:

And ever you did bear and bow the head!
It had been sorry trial, to precede
Your feet, hold up the promise of reward
For luring gleam; your footsteps kept the track \$40
Thro' dark and doubt: take all the light at once!
Trial is over, consummation shines;

Well have you served, as well henceforth command! Puccio. No, no . . . I dare not! I am grateful,

glad;

But Luria — you shall understand he 's wronged: And he 's my captain: this is not the way We soldiers climb to fortune: think again!

The sentence is not even passed, beside! I dare not: where 's the soldier could? Luria. Now, Florence — Is it to be? You will know all the strength O' the savage — to your neck the proof must go? You will prove the brute nature? Ah, I see! The savage plainly is impassible: He keeps his calm way through insulting words, Sarcastic looks, sharp gestures — one of which Would stop you, fatal to your finer sense, But if he stolidly advance, march mute Without a mark upon his callous hide, Through the mere brushwood you grow angry with, And leave the tatters of your flesh upon, — You have to learn that when the true bar comes, The murk mid-forest, the grand obstacle, Which when you reach, you give the labor up, Nor dash on, but lie down composed before, — He goes against it, like the brute he is: It falls before him, or he dies in his course. I kept my course through past ingratitude: I saw — it does seem, now, as if I saw, Could not but see, those insults as they fell, — Ay, let them glance from off me, very like, 370 Laughing, perhaps, to think the quality You grew so bold on, while you so despised The Moor's dull mute inapprehensive mood, Was saving you: I bore and kept my course.

At night my sentence will arrive, you say.
Till then I cannot, if I would, rebel

— Unauthorized to lay my office down,
Retaining my full power to will and do:

Now real wrong fronts me: see if I succumb! Florence withstands me? I will punish her.

380

After — it is to see. Tiburzio, thanks!
Go; you are free: join Lucca! I suspend
All further operations till to-night.
Thank you, and for the silence most of all!
[To Braccio.] Let my complacent bland accuser go
Carry his self-approving head and heart
Safe through the army which would trample him
Dead in a moment at my word or sign!
Go, sir, to Florence; tell friends what I say — 389
That while I wait my sentence, theirs waits them!
[To Domizia.] You, lady, — you have black Italian
eves!

I would be generous if I might: oh, yes—.
For I remember how so oft you seemed
Inclined at heart to break the barrier down
Which Florence finds God built between us both.
Alas, for generosity! this hour
Asks retribution: bear it as you may,
I must—the Moor—the savage,—pardon you!
Puccio, my trusty soldier, see them forth!

ACT IV

EVENING

Enter Puccio and Jacopo.

Puccio. What Luria will do? Ah, 't is yours, fair sir,

Your and your subtle-witted master's part, To tell me that; I tell you what he can.

Jacopo. Friend, you mistake my station: I observe The game, watch how my betters play, no more.

Puccio. But mankind are not pieces — there 's your fault!

You cannot push them, and, the first move made,

Lean back and study what the next shall be, In confidence that, when 't is fixed upon, You find just where you left them, blacks and whites: Men go on moving when your hand 's away. You build, I notice, firm on Luria's faith This whole time, — firmlier than I choose to build, Who never doubted it — of old, that is – With Luria in his ordinary mind. But now, oppression makes the wise man mad: How do I know he will not turn and stand And hold his own against you, as he may? Suppose he but withdraw to Pisa — well, -Then, even if all happen to your wish, 20 Which is a chance . . Nay — 't was an oversight, Jacopo.Not waiting till the proper warrant came: You could not take what was not ours to give. But when at night the sentence really comes, Our city authorizes past dispute Luria's removal and transfers the charge, You will perceive your duty and accept? Puccio. Accept what? muster-rolls of soldiers' names? An army upon paper? I want men, The hearts as well as hands — and where 's a heart But beats with Luria, in the multitude I come from walking through by Luria's side? You gave them Luria, set him thus to grow, Head-like, upon their trunk; one heart feeds both, They feel him there, live twice, and well know why. - For they do know, if you are ignorant, Who kept his own place and respected theirs, Managed their sweat, yet never spared his blood. All was your act: another might have served —

There 's peradventure no such dearth of heads — 40

But you chose Luria: so, they grew one flesh, And now, for nothing they can understand, Luria removed, off is to roll the head; The body 's mine — much I shall do with it! Jacopo. That 's at the worst.

Puccio. No—at the best, it is!

Best, do you hear? I saw them by his side. Only we two with Luria in the camp

Are left that keep the secret? You think that?
Hear what I know: from rear to van, no heart
But felt the quiet patient hero there
Was wronged, nor in the moveless ranks an eye

But glancing told its fellow the whole story
Of that convicted silent knot of spies

Who passed thro' them to Florence; they might

pass —
No breast but gladlier beat when free of such!
Our troops will catch up Luria, close him round,
Bear him to Florence as their natural lord,
Partake his fortune, live or die with him.

Jacopo. And by mistake catch up along with him Puccio, no doubt, compelled in self despite 60

To still continue second in command!

Puccio. No, sir, no second nor so fortunate!
Your tricks succeed with me too well for that!
I am as you have made me, live and die
To serve your end — a mere trained fighting-hack,
With words, you laugh at while they leave your
mouth

For my life's rule and ordinance of God!
I have to do my duty, keep my faith,
And earn my praise, and guard against my blame,
As I was trained. I shall accept your charge,
And fight against one better than myself,
Spite of my heart's conviction of his worth—

That, you may count on! — just as hitherto I have gone on, persuaded I was wronged, Slighted, insulted, terms we learn by rote, — All because Luria superseded me — Because the better nature, fresh-inspired, Mounted above me to its proper place! What mattered all the kindly graciousness, The cordial brother's-bearing? This was clear — 80 I, once the captain, now was subaltern, And so must keep complaining like a fool! Go, take the curse of a lost soul, I say! You neither play your puppets to the end, Nor treat the real man, — for his realness' sake Thrust rudely in their place, — with such regard As might console them for their altered rank. Me, the mere steady soldier, you depose For Luria, and here 's all your pet deserves! Of what account, then, is your laughing-stock? One word for all: whatever Luria does, — If backed by his indignant troops he turn, Revenge himself, and Florence go to ground, — Or, for a signal everlasting shame, He pardon you, simply seek better friends, Side with the Pisans and Lucchese for change - And if I, pledged to ingrates past belief, Dare fight against a man such fools call false, Who, inasmuch as he was true, fights me, -Whichever way he win, he wins for worth, 100 For every soldier, for all true and good! Sir, chronicling the rest, omit not this!

As they go, enter Luria and Husain.

Husain. Saw'st thou? — For they are gone!

The world lies bare

Before thee, to be tasted, felt and seen

Like what it is, now Florence goes away!
Thou livest now, with men art man again!
Those Florentincs were all to thee of old;
But Braccio, but Domizia, gone is each,
There lic beneath thee thine own multitudes!
Saw'st thou?

109

Luria. I saw.

Then, hold thy course, my king!
The years return. Let thy heart have its way:
Ah, they would play with thee as with all else,
Turn thee to use, and fashion thee anew,
Find out God's fault in thee as in the rest?
Oh watch, oh listen only to these fiends
Once at their occupation! Ere we know,
The free great heaven is shut, their stifling pall
Drops till it frets the very tingling hair,
So weighs it on our head, — and, for the earth,
Our common earth is tethered up and down,
Over and across—"here shalt thou move," they cry!

Luria. Ay, Husain?

Husain. So have they spoiled all beside! So stands a man girt round with Florentines, Priests, graybeards, Braccios, women, boys and spies, All in one tale, all singing the same song, How thou must house, and live at bed and board, Take pledge and give it, go their every way, Breathe to their measure, make thy blood beat time With theirs — or, all is nothing — thou art lost — A savage, how shouldst thou perceive as they? Feel glad to stand 'neath God's close naked hand! Look up to it! Why, down they pull thy neck, Lest it crush thee, who feel'st it and wouldst kiss, Without their priests that needs must glove it first, Lest peradventure flesh offend thy lip. Love woman! Why, a very beast thou art!

160

Thou must . . .

Luria. Peace, Husain!

Husain. Ay but, spoiling all. For all, else true things, substituting false, That they should dare spoil, of all instincts, thine! Should dare to take thee with thine instincts up, 140 Thy battle-ardors, like a ball of fire, And class them and allow them place and play So far, no farther — unabashed the while! Thou with the soul that never can take rest— Thou born to do, undo, and do again, And never to be still, — wouldst thou make war? Oh, that is commendable, just and right! "Come over," say they, "have the honor due In living out thy nature! Fight thy best: It is to be for Florence, not thyself! 150 For thee, it were a horror and a plague; For us, when war is made for Florence, see,

Now towers to heaven!"—

Luria. And what sealed up so long

My Husain's mouth?

Husain. Oh friend, oh lord — for me, What am I? — I was silent at thy side,

How all is changed: the fire that fed on carth

Who am a part of thee. It is thy hand,

Thy foot that glows when in the heart fresh blood

Boils up, thou heart of me! Now, live again, Again love as thou likest, hate as free!

Turn to no Braccios nor Domizias now,

To ask, before thy very limbs dare move, If Florence' welfare be concerned thereby!

Luria. So clear what Florence must expect of me? Husain. Both armies against Florence! Take revenge!

Wide, deep — to live upon, in feeling now, —

And, after live, in memory, year by year—
And, with the dear conviction, die at last!
She lies now at thy pleasure: pleasure have!
Their vaunted intellect that gilds our sense,
And blends with life, to show it better by,
— How think'st thou? — I have turned that light
on them!

They called our thirst of war a transient thing; "The battle-element must pass away
From life," they said, "and leave a tranquil world."
— Master, I took their light and turned it full
On that dull turgid vein they said would burst
And pass away; and as I looked on life,
Still everywhere I tracked this, though it hid
And shifted, lay so silent as it thought,
Changed shape and hue yet ever was the same.
Why, 't was all fighting, all their nobler life!
All work was fighting, every harm — defeat,
And every joy obtained — a victory!
Be not their dupe!

— Their dupe? That hour is past! Here stand'st thou in the glory and the calm: All is determined. Silence for me now!

[Husain goes.

Luria. Have I heard all?

Domizia [advancing from the background]. No, Luria, I remain!

Not from the motives these have urged on thee, Ignoble, insufficient, incomplete,
And pregnant each with sure seeds of decay,
As failing of sustainment from thyself,
— Neither from low revenge, nor selfishness,
Nor savage lust of power, nor one, nor all,
Shalt thou abolish Florence! I proclaim
The angel in thee, and reject the sprites

Which ineffectual crowd about his strength,
And mingle with his work and claim a share!
Inconsciously to the augustest end
Thou hast arisen: second not in rank
So much as time, to him who first ordained
That Florence, thou art to destroy, should be.
Yet him a star, too, guided, who broke first
The pride of lonely power, the life apart,
And made the eminences, each to each,
Lean o'er the level world and let it lie
Safe from the thunder henceforth 'neath their
tops;

So the few famous men of old combined, And let the multitude rise underneath, And reach them and unite — so Florence grew: 210 Braccio speaks true, it was well worth the price. But when the sheltered many grew in pride And grudged the station of the elected ones, Who, greater than their kind, are truly great Only in voluntary servitude – Time was for thee to rise, and thou art here. Such plague possessed this Florence: who can tell The mighty girth and greatness at the heart Of those so perfect pillars of the grove She pulled down in her envy? Who as I, 220 The light weak parasite born but to twine Round each of them and, measuring them, live? My light love keeps the matchless circle safe, My slender life proves what has passed away. I lived when they departed; lived to cling To thee, the mighty stranger; thou wouldst rise And burst the thraldom, and avenge, I knew. I have done nothing; all was thy strong bole. But a bird's weight can break the infant tree Which after holds an aery in its arms, 230

And 't was my care that naught should warp thy

spire From rising to the height; the roof is reached O' the forest, break through, see extend the sky! Go on to Florence, Luria! 'T is man's cause! Fail thou, and thine own fall were least to dread: Thou keepest Florence in her evil way, Encouragest her sin so much the more — And while the ignoble past is justified, Thou all the surelier warp'st the future growth, The chiefs to come, the Lurias yet unborn, That, greater than thyself, are reached o'er thee Who giv'st the vantage-ground their foes require As o'er my prostrate House thyself wast reached. Man calls thee, God requites thee! All is said, The mission of my House fulfilled at last: And the mere woman, speaking for herself, Reserves speech — it is now no woman's time.

[Domizia goes.

Luria. Thus at the last must figure Luria, then! Doing the various work of all his friends, And answering every purpose save his own. 250 No doubt, 't is well for them to wish; but him — After the exploit what were left? Perchance A little pride upon the swarthy brow, At having brought successfully to bear 'Gainst Florence' self her own especial arms, — Her craftiness, impelled by fiercer strength From Moorish blood than feeds the northern wit But after! — once the easy vengeance willed, Beautiful Florence at a word laid low — (Not in her domes and towers and palaces, Not even in a dream, that outrage!) — low, As shamed in her own eyes henceforth forever, Low, for the rival cities round to laugh,

Conquered and pardoned by a hireling Moor!

— For him, who did the irreparable wrong,
What would be left, his life's illusion fled, —
What hope or trust in the forlorn wide world?
How strange that Florence should mistake me so!
Whence grew this? What withdrew her faith from me?

Some cause! These fretful-blooded children talk 270 Against their mother, — they are wronged, they

Notable wrongs her smile makes up again! So, taking fire at each supposed offence, They may speak rashly, suffer for their speech: But what could it have been in word or deed Thus injured me? Some one word spoken more -Out of my heart, and all had changed perhaps. My fault, it must have been, - for, what gain they? Why risk the danger? See, what I could do! And my fault, wherefore visit upon them, 280 My Florentines? The notable revenge I meditated! To stay passively, Attend their summons, be as they dispose! Why, if my very soldiers keep the rank, And if my chieftains acquiesce, what then? I ruin Florence, teach her friends mistrust, Confirm her enemies in harsh belief, And when she finds one day, as find she must, . The strange mistake, and how my heart was hers, Shall it console me, that my Florentines 290 Walk with a sadder step, in graver guise, Who took me with such frankness, praised me so, At the glad outset? Had they loved me less, They had less feared what seemed a change in me. And after all, who did the harm? Not they! How could they interpose with those old fools

I' the council? Suffer for those old fools' sake — They, who made pictures of me, sang the songs About my battles? Ah, we Moors get blind Out of our proper world, where we can see! 300 The sun that guides is closer to us! There — There, my own orb! He sinks from out the sky. Why, there! a whole day has he blessed the land, My land, our Florence all about the hills, The fields and gardens, vineyards, olive-grounds, All have been blest: and yet we Florentines With souls intent upon our battle here, Found that he rose too soon, or set too late, Gave us no vantage, or gave Pisa much -Therefore we wronged him! Does he turn in ire 310 To burn the earth that cannot understand? Or drop out quietly, and leave the sky, His task once ended? Night wipes blame away. Another morning from my East shall spring And find all eyes at leisure, all disposed To watch and understand its work, no doubt. So, praise the new sun, the successor praise, Praise the new Luria and forget the old! [Taking a phial from his breast.

Strange! This is all I brought from my own land To help me: Europe would supply the rest,
All needs beside, all other helps save one!
I thought of adverse fortune, battle lost,
The natural upbraiding of the loser,
And then this quiet remedy to seek
At end of the disastrous day.

[He drinks.]

"T is sought!
This was my happy triumph-morning: Florence
Is saved: I drink this, and ere night, — die! Strange!

ACT V

NIGHT

Luria and Puccio.

Luria. I thought to do this, not to talk this: well, Such were my projects for the eity's good, To help her in attack or by defence.

Time, here as elsewhere, soon or late may take Our foresight by surprise thro' chance and change; But not a little we provide against

— If you see clear on every point.

Puccio. Most clear. Luria. Then all is said — not much, if you count

words,

Yet to an understanding ear enough
And all that my brief stay permits, beside.

Nor must you blame me, as I sought to teach
My elder in command, or threw a doubt
Upon the very skill, it comforts me
To know I leave, — your steady soldiership
Which never failed me: yet, because it seemed
A stranger's eye might haply note defect
That skill, through use and custom, overlooks —
I have gone into the old cares once more,
As if I had to come and save again
Florence — that May — that morning! 'T is night
now.

Well — I broke off with? . . .

Puccio. Of the past campaign You spoke — of measures to be kept in mind For future use.

Luria. True, so . . . but, time — no time! As well end here: remember this, and me!

Farewell now!

Puccio. Dare I speak?

Luria. South o' the river—
How is the second stream called . . . no, — the

Puccio. Pesa.

Luria. And a stone's cast from the fording-place, To the east, — the little mount's name?

Puccio. Lupo.

Ay — there the tower, and all that side is safe!
With San Romano, west of Evola,

San Miniato, Scala, Empoli,

Five towers in all, — forget not!

Puccio. Fear not me!

Luria. — Nor to memorialize the Council now, I' the easy hour, on those battalions' claim, Who forced a pass by Staggia on the hills,

And kept the Sienese at check!

Puccio. One word — Sir, I must speak! That you submit yourself To Florence' bidding, howsoe'er it prove, And give up the command to me — is much, Too much, perhaps: but what you tell me now, 40 Even will affect the other course you choose — Poor as it may be, perils even that! Refuge you seek at Pisa: yet these plans All militate for Florence, all conclude Your formidable work to make her queen O' the country, — which her rivals rose against When you began it, — which to interrupt, Pisa would buy you off at any price! You cannot mean to sue for Pisa's help, With this made perfect and on record? Luria. I — 50 At Pisa, and for refuge, do you say?

70

Puccio. Where are you going, then? You must decide

On leaving us, a silent fugitive,

Alone, at night — you, stealing through our lines, Who were this morning's Luria, — you escape To painfully begin the world once more, With such a past, as it had never been! Where are you going?

Luria. Not so far, my Puccio,

But that I hope to hear, enjoy and praise (If you mind praise from your old captain yet) 60

Each happy blow you strike for Florence.

Puccio.

But ere you gain your shelter, what may come?

For see — though nothing's surely known as yet, Still — truth must out — I apprehend the worst.

If mere suspicion stood for certainty

Before, there's nothing can arrest the step

Of Florence toward your ruin, once on foot.

Forgive her fifty times, it matters not! And having disbelieved your innocence,

How can she trust your magnanimity?

You may do harm to her — why then, you will!

And Florence is sagacious in pursuit. Have you a friend to count on?

Luria. One sure friend.

Puccio. Potent?

Luria. All-potent.

Puccio. And he is apprised?

Luria. He waits me.

Puccio. So! — Then I, put in your place,

Making my profit of all done by you,

Calling your labors mine, reaping their fruit,

To this, the State's gift, now add yours beside— That I may take as my peculiar store These your instructions to work Florence good. 80
And if, by putting some few happily
In practice, I should both advantage her
And draw down honor on myself, — what then?

Luria. Do it, my Puccio! I shall know and praise.

Puccio. Though so, men say, "mark what we gain by change

— A Puecio for a Luria!"

Even so. Luria. Puccio. Then, not for fifty hundred Florences, Would I accept one office save my own, Fill any other than my rightful post Here at your feet, my captain and my lord! 90 That such a cloud should break, such trouble be, Ere a man settle, soul and body, down Into his true place and take rest forever! Here were my wise eyes fixed on your right-hand, And so the bad thoughts eame and the worse words, And all went wrong and painfully enough,— No wonder, — till, the right spot stumbled on, All the jar stops, and there is peace at once! I am yours now, — a tool your right-hand wields! God's love, that I should live, the man I am, On orders, warrants, patents, and the like, As if there were no glowing eye i' the world To glanee straight inspiration to my brain, No glorious heart to give mine twice the beats! For, see — my doubt, where is it? — fear? 't is flown!

And Florence and her anger are a tale
To scare a child. Why, half-a-dozen words
Will tell her, spoken as I now can speak,
Her error, my past folly — and all 's right,
And you are Luria, our great chief again!
Or at the worst — which worst were best of all —

To exile or to death I follow you.

Luria. Thanks, Puccio! Let me use the privilege You grant me: if I still command you, — stay! Remain here — my vicegerent, it shall be, And not successor: let me, as of old, Still serve the State, my spirit prompting yours — Still triumph, one for both. There! Leave me now! You cannot disobey my first command? Remember what I spoke of Jacopo, 120 And what you promised to concert with him! Send him to speak with me — nay, no farewell! You shall be by me when the sentence comes.

[Puccio goes.

So, there 's one Florentine returns again! Out of the genial morning-company, One face is left to take into the night.

Enter JACOPO.

Jacopo. I wait for your command, sir. Luria. What, so soon? I thank your ready presence and fair word. I used to notice you in early days As of the other species, so to speak, 130 Those watchers of the lives of us who act -That weigh our motives, scrutinize our thoughts. So, I propound this to your faculty As you would tell me, were a town to take . . . That is, of old. I am departing hence Under these imputations; that is naught — I leave no friend on whom they may rebound, Hardly a name behind me in the land, Being a stranger: all the more behoves That I regard how altered were the case 140 With natives of the country, Florentines

On whom the like mischance should fall: the roots O' the tree survive the ruin of the trunk — No root of mine will throb, you understand. But I had predecessors, Florentines, Accused as I am now, and punished so — The Traversari: you know more than I How stigmatized they are, and lost in shame. Now Puccio, who succeeds me in command, Both served them and succeeded, in due time; 150 He knows the way, holds proper documents, And has the power to lay the simple truth Before an active spirit, as I count yours: And also there 's Tiburzio, my new friend, Will, at a word, confirm such evidence, He being the great chivalric soul we know. I put it to your tact, sir — were 't not well, -A grace, though but for contrast's sake, no more, -If you who witness, and have borne a share Involuntarily in my mischance, 160 Should, of your proper motion, set your skill To indicate — that is, investigate The right or wrong of what mischance befell Those famous citizens, your countrymen? Nay, you shall promise nothing: but reflect, And if your sense of justice prompt you — good! Jacopo. And if, the trial past, their fame stand clear To all men's eyes, as yours, my lord, to mine — Their ghosts may sleep in quiet satisfied! For me, a straw thrown up into the air, 170 My testimony goes for a straw's worth. I used to hold by the instructed brain, And move with Braccio as my master-wind; The heart leads surelier: I must move with you —

As greatest now, who ever were the best.

So, let the last and humblest of your servants Accept your charge, as Braccio's heretofore, And tender homage by obeying you! [Jacopo goes. Luria. Another! Luria goes not poorly forth.

If we could wait! The only fault 's with time; 180 All men become good creatures: but so slow!

Enter Domizia.

Luria. Ah, you once more?

Domizia. Domizia, whom you knew,
Performed her task, and died with it. 'T is I,
Another woman, you have never known.

Let the past sleep now!

Luria. I have done with it. Domizia. How inexhaustibly the spirit grows! One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach With her whole energies and die content, So like a wall at the world's edge it stood, With naught beyond to live for, — is that reached? Already are new undreamed energies Outgrowing under, and extending farther To a new object; there 's another world. See! I have told the purpose of my life; 'T is gained: you are decided, well or ill— You march on Florence, or submit to her -My work is done with you, your brow declares. But — leave you? More of you seems yet to reach:
I stay for what I just begin to see.

199 Luria. So that you turn not to the past!

Domizia. You trace

Nothing but ill in it — my selfish impulse,
Which sought its end and disregarded yours?

Laria Speak pet against your nature, best

Luria. Speak not against your nature: best, each

keep

His own — you, yours — most, now that I keep mine,

— At least, fall by it, having too weakly stood. God's finger marks distinctions, all so fine, We would confound: the lesser has its use, Which, when it apes the greater, is forgone. I, born a Moor, lived half a Florentine; But, punished properly, can end, a Moor.

Beside, there 's something makes me understand Your nature: I have seen it.

Domizia. Aught like mine?
Luria. In my own East . . . if you would stoop

and help

My barbarous illustration! It sounds ill; Yet there 's no wrong at bottom: rather, praise.

Domizia. Well?

Luria. We have creatures there, which if you saw The first time, you would doubtless marvel at For their surpassing beauty, craft and strength. And though it were a lively moment's shock when you first found the purpose of forked tongues That seem innocuous in their lambent play, Yet, once made know such grace requires such guard, Your reason soon would acquiesce, I think, In wisdom which made all things for the best—So, take them, good with ill, contentedly, The prominent beauty with the latent sting. I am glad to have seen you wondrous Florentines: Yet . . .

Domizia. I am here to listen.

Luria. My own East!
How nearer God we were! He glows above
With scarce an intervention, presses close
And palpitatingly, his soul o'er ours:
We feel him, nor by painful reason know!

The everlasting minute of creation Is felt there; now it is, as it was then; All changes at his instantaneous will, Not by the operation of a law Whose maker is elsewhere at other work. His hand is still engaged upon his world— Man's praise can forward it, man's prayer suspend, For is not God all-mighty? To recast The world, erase old things and make them new, What costs it Him? So, man breathes nobly there. And inasmuch as feeling, the East's gift, Is quick and transient — comes, and lo, is gone -While Northern thought is slow and durable, Surely a mission was reserved for me, Who, born with a perception of the power And use of the North's thought for us of the East, Should have remained, turned knowledge to account, Giving thought's character and permanence 250 To the too transitory feeling there-Writing God's message plain in mortal words. Instead of which, I leave my fated field For this where such a task is needed least, Where all are born consummate in the art I just perceive a chance of making mine, — And then, deserting thus my early post, I wonder that the men I come among Mistake me! There, how all had understood, Still brought fresh stuff for me to stamp and keep, Fresh instinct to translate them into law! Me, who .

Domizia. Who here the greater task achieve, More needful even: who have brought fresh stuff For us to mould, interpret and prove right, — New feeling fresh from God, which, could we know O' the instant, where had been our need of it?

— Whose life re-teaches us what life should be, What faith is, loyalty and simpleness, All, once revealed but taught us so long since That, having mere tradition of the fact,— 270 Truth copied falteringly from copies faint, The early traits all dropped away, — we said On sight of faith like yours, "So looks not faith We understand, described and praised before." But still, the feat was dared; and though at first It suffered from our haste, yet trace by trace Old memories reappear, old truth returns. Our slow thought does its work, and all 's re-known. Oh noble Luria! What you have decreed I see not, but no animal revenge, 280 No brute-like punishment of bad by worse — It cannot be, the gross and vulgar way Traced for me by convention and mistake. Has gained that calm approving eye and brow! Spare Florence, after all! Let Luria trust To his own soul, he whom I trust with mine!

Luria. In time!

Domizia. How, Luria?

Luria. It is midnight now,
And they arrive from Florence with my fate.

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Domizia. I hear no step.

Luria. I feel one, as you say.

Enter Husain.

Husain. The man returned from Florence!
Luria. As I knew.

Husain. He seeks thee.

Luria. And I only wait for him.

Aught else?

Husain. A movement of the Lucchese troops

Southward —

Luria. Toward Florence? Have out instantly ... Ah, old use clings! Puccio must care henceforth. In — quick — 'tis nearly midnight! Bid him come!

Enter Tiburzio, Braccio, and Puccio.

Tiburzio? — not at Pisa? Tiburzio. Lreturn From Florence: I serve Pisa, and must think By such procedure I have served her best. A people is but the attempt of many To rise to the completer life of one; 300 And those who live as models for the mass Are singly of more value than they all. Such man are you, and such a time is this, That your sole fate concerns a nation more Than much apparent welfare: that to prove Your rectitude, and duly crown the same, Imports us far beyond to-day's event, A battle's loss or gain: man's mass remains, — Keep but God's model safe, new men will rise To take its mould, and other days to prove 310 How great a good was Luria's glory. True— I might go try my fortune as you urged, And, joining Lucca, helped by your disgrace, Repair our harm — so were to-day's work done; But where leave Luria for our sons to see? No. I look farther. I have testified (Declaring my submission to your arms) Her full success to Florence, making clear Your probity, as none else could: I spoke, And out it shone!

Ah — until Braccio spoke! 320 Luria. Braccio. Till Braccio told in just a word the

whole —

His lapse to error, his return to knowledge:
Which told . . . Nay, Luria, I should droop the head,

I whom shame rests with! Yet I dare look up,
Sure of your pardon now I sue for it,
Knowing you wholly. Let the midnight end!
'T is morn approaches! Still you answer not?
Sunshine succeeds the shadow past away;
Our faces, which phantasmal grew and false,
Are all that felt it: they change round you, turn
Truly themselves now in its vanishing.
Speak, Luria! Here begins your true career:
Look up, advance! All now is possible,
Fact's grandeur, no false dreaming! Dare and do!
And every prophecy shall be fulfilled
Save one—(nay, now your word must come at last)
— That you would punish Florence!

Husain [pointing to Lurya's dead hadel. The life of the sure of the su

Husain [pointing to Luria's dead body]. That is

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

1846

ACT FIRST, BEING WHAT WAS CALLED THE POETRY OF CHIAPPINO'S LIFE: AND ACT SECOND, ITS PROSE.

PERSONS

LUITOLFO and EULALIA, betrothed lovers. Chiappino, their friend. Ogniben, the Pope's Legate. Citizens of Faenza.

Time, 15 —. Place, Faenza.

ACT I

Scene — Inside Luitolfo's house.

CHIAPPINO, EULALIA.

Eulalia. What is it keeps Luitolfo? Night's

fast falling,

And 't was scarce sunset . . . had the ave-bell Sounded before he sought the Provost's house? I think not: all he had to say would take Few minutes, such a very few, to say! How do you think, Chiappino? If our lord The Provost were less friendly to your friend Than everybody here professes him, I should begin to tremble — should not you? Why are you silent when so many times I turn and speak to you? Chiappino. That 's good!

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Eulalia. You laugh! Chiappino. Yes. I had fancied nothing that bears price

In the whole world was left to call my own;
And, may be, felt a little pride thereat.
Up to a single man's or woman's love,
Down to the right in my own flesh and blood,

There's nothing mine, I fancied, — till you spoke:
— Counting, you see, as "nothing" the permission

To study this peculiar lot of mine

In silence: well, go silence with the rest
Of the world's good! What can I say, shall serve?

Eulalia. This,—lest you, even more than needs,

embitter

Our parting: say your wrongs have cast, for once, A cloud across your spirit!

Chiappino. How a cloud?

Eulalia. No man nor woman loves you, did you

Chiappino. My God, were 't not for thee!
Eulalia. Ay, God remains,

Even did men forsake you.

Chiappino. Oh, not so!
Were 't not for God, I mean, what hope of truth—
Speaking truth, hearing truth, would stay with man?
I, now — the homeless friendless penniless

Proscribed and eviled wretch who were all the

Proscribed and exiled wretch who speak to you,— Ought to speak truth, yet could not, for my death, (The thing that tempts me most) help speaking lies. About your friendship and Luitolfo's courage

And all our townsfolk's equanimity—

Through sheer incompetence to rid myself

Of the old miserable lying trick

Caught from the liars I have lived with, — God, Did I not turn to thee! It is thy prompting

....

I dare to be ashamed of, and thy counsel
Would die along my coward lip, I know.
But I do turn to see. This craven tongue,
These features which refuse the soul its way,
Reclaim thou! Give me truth—truth, power to
speak—

And after be sole present to approve
The spoken truth! Or, stay, that spoken truth,
Who knows but you, too, may approve?

Eulalia. Ah, well —

Keep silence then, Chiappino!

Chiappino. You would hear,
You shall now, — why the thing we please to style
My gratitude to you and all your friends
For service done me, is just gratitude
So much as yours was service: no whit more.
I was born here, so was Luitolfo; both
At one time, much with the same circumstance
Of rank and wealth; and both, up to this night
Of parting company, have side by side
Still fared, he in the sunshine — I, the shadow.
"Why?" asks the world. "Because," replies the
world

To its complacent self, "these playfellows,
Who took at church the holy-water drop
Each from the other's finger, and so forth,—
Were of two moods: Luitolfo was the proper
Friend-making, everywhere friend-finding soul,
Fit for the sunshine, so, it followed him.
A happy-tempered bringer of the best
Out of the worst; who bears with what 's past cure,
And puts so good a face on 't—wisely passive
Where action 's fruitless, while he remedies
In silence what the foolish rail against;
A man to smooth such natures as parade

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Of opposition must exasperate;
No general gauntlet-gatherer for the weak
Against the strong, yet over-scrupulous
At lucky junctures; one who won't forego
The after-battle work of binding wounds,
Because, forsooth he'd have to bring himself
To side with wound-inflictors for their leave!"
— Why do you gaze, nor help me to repeat
What comes so glibly from the common mouth,
About Luitolfo and his so-styled friend?

**Eulalia*. Because that friend's sense is obscured . . .

Chiappino. I thought You would be readier with the other half Of the world's story, my half! Yet, 't is true. For all the world does say it. Say your worst!

True, I thank God, I ever said "you sin,"
When a man did sin: if I could not say it,
I glared it at him; if I could not glare it,

I prayed against him; then my part seemed over. God's may begin yet: so it will, I trust.

Eulalia. If the world outraged you, did we?
Chiappino. What 's "me"

That you use well or ill? It 's man, in me, All your successes are an outrage to, You all, whom sunshine follows, as you say! Here 's our Faenza birthplace; they send here A provost from Ravenna: how he rules, You can at times be eloquent about.

"Then, end his rule!" — "Ah yes, one stroke does that!

But patience under wrong works slow and sure.
Must violence still bring peace forth? He, beside,
Returns so blandly one's obeisance! ah—

Some latent virtue may be lingering yet,

Some human sympathy which, once excite,
And all the lump were leavened quietly:
So, no more talk of striking, for this time!"
But I, as one of those he rules, won't bear
These pretty takings-up and layings-down
Our cause, just as you think occasion suits.
Enough of earnest, is there? You 'll play, will you?
Diversify your tactics, give submission,
Obsequiousness and flattery a turn,
While we die in our misery patient deaths?
We all are outraged then, and I the first:
I, for mankind, resent each shrug and smirk,
Each beck and bend, each . . . all you do and are,
I hate!

Eulalia. We share a common censure, then. 'T is well you have not poor Luitolfo's part Nor mine to point out in the wide offence.

Chiappino. Oh, shall I let you so escape me, lady? Come, on your own ground, lady, — from yourself, (Leaving the people's wrong, which most is mine) What have I got to be so grateful for?

These three last fines, no doubt, one on the other Paid by Luitolfo?

Eulalia. Shame, Chiappino!

Chiappino.

Fall presently on who deserves it most!

— Which is to see. He paid my fines — my friend,
Your prosperous smooth lover presently,
Then, scarce your wooer, — soon, your husband;
well —

I loved you.

Eulalia. Hold!

Chiappino. You knew it, years ago.
When my voice faltered and my eye grew dim
Because you gave me your silk mask to hold—130

My voice that greatens when there 's need to curse The people's Provost to their heart's content,

— My eye, the Provost, who bears all men's eyes,
Banishes now because he cannot bear,

You knew . . . but you do your parts — my part, I:
So be it! You flourish, I decay: all 's well.

Eulalia. I hear this for the first time.

Chiappino. The fault 's there?

Then my days spoke not, and my nights of fire

Were voiceless? Then the very heart may burst,

Yet all prove naught, because no mincing speech Tells leisurely that thus it is and thus?

Eulalia, truce with toying for this once!

A banished fool, who troubles you to-night For the last time — why, what's to fear from

You knew I loved you!

You were my now-affianced lover's friend—
Came in, went out with him, could speak as he.
All praise your ready parts and pregnant wit;
See how your words come from you in a crowd!
Luitolfo's first to place you o'er himself
In all that challenges respect and love:
Yet you were silent then, who blame me now.
I say all this by fascination, sure:
I, all but wed to one I love, yet listen!
It must be, you are wronged, and that the wrongs
Luitolfo pities . . .

Chiappino. — You too pity? Do!
But hear first what my wrongs are; so began
This talk and so shall end this talk. I say,
Was 't not enough that I must strive (I saw)
To grow so far familiar with your charms
As next contrive some way to win them — which

To do, an age seemed far too brief — for, see! We all aspire to heaven; and there lies heaven Above us: go there! Dare we go? no, surely! How dare we go without a reverent pause, A growing less unfit for heaven? Just so, I dared not speak: the greater fool, it seems! Was 't not enough to struggle with such folly, But I must have, beside, the very man Whose slight free loose and incapacious soul Gave his tongue scope to say whate'er he would - Must have him load me with his benefits — For fortune's fiercest stroke?

Eulalia. Justice to him That 's now entreating, at his risk perhaps, Justice for you! Did he once call those acts Of simple friendship — bounties, benefits?

Chiappino. No: the straight course had been to

call them thus.

Then, I had flung them back, and kept myself Unhampered, free as he to win the prize We both sought. But "the gold was dross," he said: 180

"He loved me, and I loved him not: why spurn

A trifle out of superfluity?

He had forgotten he had done as much." So had not I! Henceforth, try as I could To take him at his word, there stood by you My benefactor; who might speak and laugh And urge his nothings, even banter me Before you — but my tongue was tied. A dream! Let's wake: your husband . . . how you shake at that! 189

Good — my revenge!

Eulalia. Why should I shake? What forced Or forces me to be Luitolfo's bride?

Chiappino. There's my revenge, that nothing

forces you.

No gratitude, no liking of the eye
Nor longing of the heart, but the poor bond
Of habit — here so many times he came,
So much he spoke, — all these compose the tie
That pulls you from me. Well, he paid my fines,
Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe, dish from table;
He spoke a good word to the Provost here,
Held me up when my fortunes fell away
— It had not looked so well to let me drop —
Men take pains to preserve a tree-stump, even,
Whose boughs they played beneath — much more
a friend.

But one grows tired of seeing, after the first, Pains spent upon impracticable stuff Like me. I could not change: you know the rest. I've spoke my mind too fully out, by chance, This morning to our Provost; so, ere night I leave the city on pain of death. And now On my account there's gallant intercession 210 Goes forward — that 's so graceful! — and anon He'll noisily come back: "the intercession Was made and fails; all 's over for us both; 'T is vain contending; I would better go." And I do go — and straight to you he turns Light of a load; and ease of that permits His visage to repair the natural bland Economy, sore broken late to suit My discontent. Thus, all are pleased — you, with him.

He with himself, and all of you with me

"Who," say the citizens, "had done far better
In letting people sleep upon their woes,
If not possessed with talent to relieve them

When once awake; — but then I had," they 'll say, "Doubtless some unknown compensating pride In what I did; and as I seem content With ruining myself, why, so should they be." And so they are, and so be with his prize The devil, when he gets them speedily! Why does not your Luitolfo come? I long 230 To don this cloak and take the Lugo path. It seems you never loved me, then? Eulalia. Chiappino!

Chiappino. Never?

Eulalia. Never.

Chiappino. That's sad. Say what I might, There was no help from being sure this while You loved me. Love like mine must have return, I thought: no river starts but to some sea. And had you loved me, I could soon devise Some specious reason why you stifled love, Some fancied self-denial on your part, Which made you choose Luitolfo; so, excepting 240 From the wide condemnation of all here, One woman. Well, the other dream may break! If I knew any heart, as mine loved you, Loved me, though in the vilest breast 't were lodged, I should, I think, be forced to love again: Else there 's no right nor reason in the world.

Eulalia. "If you knew," say you, — but I did

not know.

That 's where you 're blind, Chiappino! — a disease Which if I may remove, I'll not repent The listening to. You cannot, will not, see 250 How, place you but in every circumstance Of us, you are just now indignant at, You'd be as we.

I should be? . . . that; again! Chiappino.

I, to my friend, my country and my love, Be as Luitolfo and these Faentines?

Eulalia. As we.

Chiappino. Now, I'll say something to remember. I trust in nature for the stable laws Of beauty and utility. - Spring shall plant, And Autumn garner to the end of time: I trust in God — the right shall be the right 960 And other than the wrong, while he endures: I trust in my own soul, that can perceive The outward and the inward, nature's good And God's: so, seeing these men and myself, Having a right to speak, thus do I speak. I'll not curse — God bears with them, well may I — But I — protest against their claiming me. I simply say, if that 's allowable,

I would not (broadly) do as they have done. -God curse this townful of born slaves, bred slaves, Branded into the blood and bone, slaves! Curse

Whoever loves, above his liberty,

House, land or life! and . . . [A knocking without. — bless my hero-friend,

Luitolfo!

Eulalia. How he knocks!

Chiappino. The peril, lady! "Chiappino, I have run a risk — a risk! For when I prayed the Provost (he 's my friend) To grant you a week's respite of the sentence That confiscates your goods, exiles yourself, He shrugged his shoulder—I say, shrugged it! Yes, And fright of that drove all else from my head. 280 Here's a good purse of scudi: off with you, Lest of that shrug come what God only knows! The scudi — friend, they 're trash — no thanks, I

beg!

Take the north gate, — for San Vitale's suburb, Whose double taxes you appealed against, In discomposure at your ill-success

Is apt to stone you: there, there — only go!

Beside, Eulalia here looks sleepily.

Shake . . . oh, you hurt me, so you squeeze my wrist!"

— Is it not thus you'll speak, adventurous friend? As he opens the door, Luitolfo rushes in, his garments disordered.

Eulalia. Luitolfo! Blood?

There 's more — and more of it! Luitolfo.

Eulalia — take the garment! No — you, friend! You take it and the blood from me — you dare!

Eulalia. Oh, who has hurt you? where's the wound?

Chiappino. "Who," say you?

The man with many a touch of virtue yet!
The Provost's friend has proved too frank of speech,

And this comes of it. Miserable hound!

This comes of temporizing, as I said!

Here 's fruit of your smooth speeches and soft looks! Now see my way! As God lives, I go straight 300 To the palace and do justice, once for all!

Luitolfo. What says he?

I'll do justice on him. Chiappino.

Him? Luitolfo.

Chiappino. The Provost.

I 've just killed him. Luitolfo. Eulalia: Oh, my God!

Luitolfo. My friend, they're on my trace; they 'll have me - now!

They 're round him, busy with him: soon they 'll find

He's past their help, and then they'll be on me!

Chiappino, save Eulalia! I forget . . . ,

Were you not bound for . . .

Chiappino. Lugo?

Luitolfo. Ah — yes — yes!

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That was the point I prayed of him to change.

Well, go — be happy! Is Eulalia safe?

They 're on me!

Chiappino. 'T is through me they reach you, then! Friend, seem the man you are! Lock arms—that's

right!

Now tell me what you 've done; explain how you That still professed forbearance, still preached peace,

Could bring yourself . . .

Luitolfo. What was peace for, Chiappino? I tried peace: did that promise, when peace failed, Strife should not follow? All my peaceful days Were just the prelude to a day like this.

I cried "You call me 'friend': save my true friend!

Save him, or lose me!"

Chiappino. But you never said 320

You meant to tell the Provost thus and thus.

Luitolfo. Why should I say it? What else did I mean?

Chiappino. Well? He persisted?

Luitolfo. — "Would so order it

You should not trouble him too soon again."

I saw a meaning in his eye and lip;

I poured my heart's store of indignant words
Out on him: then — I know not! He retorted,

And I . . . some staff lay there to hand — I think, He bade his servants thrust mc out — I struck . . .

Ah, they come! Fly you, save yourselves, you two! The dead back-weight of the beheading axe! 331 The glowing trip-hook, thumbscrews and the gadge!

Eulalia. They do come! Torches in the Place! Farewell,

Chiappino! You can work no good to us — Much to yourself; believe not, all the world Must needs be cursed henceforth!

Chiappino. And you?

Eulalia. I stay.

Chiappino. Ha, ha! Now, listen! I am master heret

This was my coarse disguise; this paper shows My path of flight and place of refuge — see — Lugo, Argenta, past San Nicolo, 340 Ferrara, then to Venice and all's safe! Put on the cloak! His people have to fetch A compass round about. There's time enough Ere they can reach us, so you straightway make For Lugo . . . nay, he hears not! On with it — The cloak, Luitolfo, do you hear me? See — He obeys he knows not how. Then, if I must —

Answer me! Do you know the Lugo gate? Eulalia. The north-west gate, over the bridge?

Luitolfo. I know. Chiappino. Well, there—you are not frightened? all my route 350

Is traced in that: at Venice you escape

Their power. Eulalia, I am master here!
[Shouts from without. He pushes out Lui-TOLFO, who complies mechanically.

In time! Nay, help me with him — so! He 's gone. Eulalia. What have you done? On you, perchance, all know

The Provost's hater, will men's vengeance fall As our accomplicé.

Mere accomplice? See! Chiappino. [Putting on Luitolfo's vest. Now, lady, am I true to my profession,

Or one of these?

Eulalia. You take Luitolfo's place?

Chiappino. Die for him.

Eulalia. Well done!

[Shouts increase.

Chiappino. How the people tarry! I can't be silent; I must speak: or sing — 360

How natural to sing now!

Eulalia. Hush and pray!

We are to die; but even I perceive
'T is not a very hard thing so to die.
My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,

Poor Cesca, suffers more from one day's life

With the stern husband; Tisbe's heart goes forth

Each evening after that wild son of hers,

To track his thoughtless footstep through the streets:

How easy for them both to die like this!

I am not sure that I could live as they.

Chiappino. Here they come, crowds! They

pass the gate? Yes! — No! —

One torch is in the courtyard. Here flock all.

Eulalia. At least Luitolfo has escaped. What cries!

Chiappino. If they would drag one to the marketplace,

One might speak there!

Eulalia. List, list!

Chiappino. They mount the steps.

Enter the Populace.

Chiappino. I killed the Provost!

The Populace [speaking together]. 'T was Chiappino, friends!

Our saviour! The best man at last as first!

He who first made us feel what chains we wore, He also strikes the blow that shatters them. He at last saves us — our best citizen! 380 — Oh, have you only courage to speak now? My eldest son was christened a year since "Čino" to keep Chiappino's name in mind — Cino, for shortness merely, you observe!
The city 's in our hands. The guards are fled. Do you, the cause of all, come down — come up — Come out to counsel us, our chief, our king, Whate'er rewards you! Choose your own reward!

The peril over, its reward begins!

Come and harangue us in the market-place! 390

Eulalia. Chiappino?

Yes — I understand your eyes! Chiappino. You think I should have promptlier disowned This deed with its strange unforeseen success. In favor of Luitolfo. But the peril, So far from ended, hardly seems begun. To-morrow, rather, when a calm succeeds, We easily shall make him full amends: And meantime — if we save them as they pray, And justify the deed by its effects?

Eulalia. You would, for worlds, you had denied

at once.

Chiappino. I know my own intention, be assured!

All 's well. Precede us, fellow-citizens!

ACT II

Scene — The market-place. Luitolfo in disguise mingling with the Populace assembled opposite the Provost's Palace.

1st Bystander [to Luitolfo]. You, a friend of Luitolfo's? Then, your friend is vanished, — in all probability killed on the night that his patron the tyrannical Provost was loyally suppressed here, exactly a month ago, by our illustrious fellowcitizen, thrice-noble saviour, and new Provost that is like to be, this very morning, — Chiappino!

Luitolfo. He the new Provost?

2nd Bystander. Up those steps will he go, and beneath yonder pillar stand, while Ogniben, the 10 Pope's Legate from Ravenna, reads the new dignitary's title to the people, according to established custom: for which reason, there is the assemblage you inquire about.

Luitolfo. Chiappino — the late Provost's successor? Impossible! But tell me of that presently. What I would know first of all is, wherefore Luitolfo must so necessarily have been killed on that memo-

rable night?

3rd Bystander. You were Luitolfo's friend? 20 So was I. Never, if you will credit me, did there exist so poor-spirited a milksop. He, with all the opportunities in the world, furnished by daily converse with our oppressor, would not stir a finger to help us: and, when Chiappino rose in solitary majesty and . . . how does one go on saying? . . . dealt the godlike blow, — this Luitolfo, not unreasonably fearing the indignation of an aroused and liberated people, fled precipitately. He may have got trodden to death in the press at the 30

south-east gate, when the Provost's guards fled through it to Ravenna, with their wounded master. — if he did not rather hang himself under some

hedge.

Luitolfo. Or why not simply have lain perdue in some quiet corner, — such as San Cassiano, where his estate was, — receiving daily intelligence from some sure friend, meanwhile, as to the turn matters were taking here — how, for instance, the Provost was not dead, after all, only wounded — or, 40 as to-day's news would seem to prove, how Chiappino was not Brutus the Elder, after all, only the new Provost — and thus Luitolfo be enabled to watch a favorable opportunity for returning?

Might it not have been so?

3rd Bystander. Why, he may have taken that care of himself, certainly, for he came of a cautious stock. I'll tell you how his uncle, just such another gingerly treader on tiptoes with finger on lip, how he met his death in the great plague-year: 50 dico vobis! Hearing that the seventeenth house in a certain street was infected, he calculates to pass it in safety by taking plentiful breath, say, when he shall arrive at the eleventh house; then scouring by, holding that breath, till he be got so far on the other side as number twenty-three, and thus elude the danger. — And so did he begin; but, as he arrived at thirteen, we will say, - thinking to improve on his precaution by putting up a little prayer to St. Nepomucene of Prague, this 60 exhausted so much of his lungs' reserve, that at sixteen it was clean spent, — consequently at the fatal seventcen he inhaled with a vigor and persistence enough to suck you any latent venom out of the heart of a stone — Ha, ha!

Luitolfo [aside]. (If I had not lent that man the money he wanted last spring, I should fear this bitterness was attributable to me.) Luitolfo is dead then, one may conclude?

3rd Bystander. Why, he had a house here, 70 and a woman to whom he was affianced; and as they both pass naturally to the new Provost, his

friend and heir . . .

Luitolfo. Ah, I suspected you of imposing on me with your pleasantry! I know Chiappino better.

1st Bystander. (Our friend has the bile! After all, I do not dislike finding somebody vary a little this general gape of admiration at Chiappino's glorious qualities.) Pray, how much may you know of what has taken place in Facnza since that memo- so rable night?

Luitolfo. It is most to the purpose, that I know Chiappino to have been by profession a hater of that very office of Provost, you now charge him

with proposing to accept.

1st Bystander. Sir, I'll tell you. That night was indeed memorable. Up we rose, a mass of us, men, women, children; out fled the guards with the body of the tyrant; we were to defy the world: but, next gray morning, "What will Rome say?" be- 90 gan everybody. You know we are governed by Ravenna, which is governed by Rome. And quietly into the town, by the Ravenna road, comes on muleback a portly personage, Ogniben by name, with the quality of Pontifical Legate; trots briskly through the streets humming a "Cur fremuere gentes," and makes directly for the Provost's Palace—there it faces you. "One Messer Chiappino is your leader? I have known three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!" (laughing gently to himself) 100

- "Give me the help of your arm from my mule to yonder steps under the pillar — So! And now, my revolters and good friends, what do you want? The guards burst into Ravenna last night bearing your wounded Provost; and, having had a little talk with him, I take on myself to come and try appease the disorderliness, before Rome, hearing of it, resort to another method: 't is I come, and not another, from a certain love I confess to, of composing differences. So, do you understand, 110 you are about to experience this unheard-of tyranny from me, that there shall be no heading nor hanging, no confiscation nor exile: I insist on your simply pleasing yourselves. And now, pray, what does please you? To live without any government at all? Or having decided for one, to see its minister murdered by the first of your body that chooses to find himself wronged, or disposed for reverting to first principles and a justice anterior to all institutions, — and so will you carry matters, that 120 the rest of the world must at length unite and put down such a den of wild beasts? As for vengeance on what has just taken place, — once for all, the wounded man assures me he cannot conjecture who struck him; and this so earnestly, that one may be sure he knows perfectly well what intimate acquaintance could find admission to speak with him late last evening. I come not for vengeance therefore, but from pure curiosity to hear what you will do next." And thus he ran on, on, easily 130 and volubly, till he seemed to arrive quite naturally at the praise of law, order, and paternal government by somebody from rather a distance. All our citizens were in the snare, and about to be friends with so congenial an adviser; but that

Chiappino suddenly stood forth, spoke out indignantly, and set things right again.

Luitolfo. Do you see? I recognize him there! 3rd Bystander. Ay, but, mark you, at the end of Chiappino's longest period in praise of a pure 140 republic, — "And by whom do I desire such a government should be administered, perhaps, but by one like yourself?" — returns the Legate: thereupon speaking for a quarter of an hour together, on the natural and only legitimate government by the best and wisest. And it should seem there was soon discovered to be no such vast discrepancy at bottom between this and Chiappino's theory, place but each in its proper light. "Oh, are you there?" quoth Chiappino: "Ay, in that, I 150 agree," returns Chiappino: and so on.

Luitolfo. But did Chiappino cede at once to

this?

For instance, he said that the difference between him and all his fellows was, that they seemed all wishing to be kings in one or another way,—"whereas what right," asked he, "has any man to wish to be superior to another?"—whereat, "Ah, sir," answers the Legate, "this is the 160 death of me, so often as I expect something is really going to be revealed to us by you clearer-seers, deeper-thinkers—this—that your right-hand (to speak by a figure) should be found taking up the weapon it displayed so ostentatiously, not to destroy any dragon in our path, as was prophesied, but simply to cut off its own fellow left-hand: yourself set about attacking yourself. For see now! Here are you who, I make sure, glory exceedingly in knowing the noble nature of the soul, its 170

divine impulses, and so forth; and with such a knowledge you stand, as it were, armed to encounter the natural doubts and fears as to that same inherent nobility, which are apt to waylay us, the weaker ones, in the road of life. And when we look eagerly to see them fall before you, lo, round you wheel, only the left-hand gets the blow; one proof of the soul's nobility destroys simply another proof, quite as good, of the same, for you are found delivering an opinion like this! Why, what is 180 this perpetual yearning to exceed, to subdue, to be better than, and a king over, one's fellows, all that you so disclaim, - but the very tendency yourself are most proud of, and under another form, would oppose to it, — only in a lower stage of manifestation? You don't want to be vulgarly superior to your fellows after their poor fashion to have me hold solemnly up your gown's tail, or hand you an express of the last importance from the Pope, with all these bystanders noticing how unconcerned you look the while: but neither does our gaping friend, the burgess yonder, want the other kind of kingship, that consists in under-standing better than his fellows this and similar points of human nature, nor to roll under his tongue this sweeter morsel still, — the feeling that, through immense philosophy, he does not feel, he rather thinks, above you and me!" And so chatting, they glided off arm-in-arm.

Luitolfo. And the result is . . . 200

1st Bystander. Why that, a month having gone by, the indomitable Chiappino, marrying as he will Luitolfo's love — at all events succeeding to Luitolfo's wealth — becomes the first inhabitant of Faenza, and a proper aspirant to the Provost-

ship; which we assemble here to see conferred on him this morning. The Legate's Guard to clear

the way! He will follow presently.

Luitolfo [withdrawing a little]. I understand the drift of Eulalia's communications less than 210 ever. Yet she surely said, in so many words, that Chiappino was in urgent danger: wherefore, disregarding her injunction to continue in my retreat and await the result of — what she called, some experiment yet in process — I hastened here without her leave or knowledge: how could I else? But if this they say be true — if it were for such a purpose, she and Chiappino kept me away . . . Oh, no, no! I must confront him and her before I believe this of them. And at the word, see!

Enter Chiappino and Eulalia.

Eulalia. We part here, then? The change in

your principles would seem to be complete.

Chiappino. Now, why refuse to see that in my present course I change no principles, only readapt them and more adroitly? I had despaired of, what you may call the material instrumentality of life; of ever being able to rightly operate on mankind through such a deranged machinery as the existing modes of government: but now, if I suddenly discover how to inform these perverted in- 230 stitutions with fresh purpose, bring the functionary limbs once more into immediate communication with, and subjection to, the soul I am about to bestow on them — do you see? Why should one desire to invent, as long as it remains possible to renew and transform? When all further hope of the old organization shall be extinct, then,

I grant you, it may be time to try and create another.

Eulalia. And there being discoverable some 240 hope yet in the hitherto much-abused old system of absolute government by a Provost here, you mean to take your time about endeavoring to realize those visions of a perfect State, we once heard of?

Chiappino. Say, I would fain realize my conception of a palace, for instance, and that there is, abstractedly, but a single way of erecting one perfectly. Here, in the market-place is my allotted building-ground; here I stand without a stone to 250 lay, or a laborer to help me, — stand, too, during a short day of life, close on which the night comes. On the other hand, circumstances suddenly offer me (turn and see it!) the old Provost's house to experiment upon — ruinous, if you please, wrongly constructed at the beginning, and ready to tumble now. But materials abound, a crowd of workmen offer their services; here, exists yet a Hall of Audience of originally noble proportions, there a Guest-chamber of symmetrical design enough: 260 and I may restore, enlarge, abolish or unite these to heart's content. Ought I not make the best of such an opportunity, rather than continue to gaze disconsolately with folded arms on the flat pavement here, while the sun goes slowly down, never to rise again? Since you cannot understand this nor me, it is better we should part as you desire.

Eulalia. So, the love breaks away too!

Chiappino. No, rather my soul's capacity for love widens — needs more than one object to 270 content it, — and, being better instructed, will not persist in seeing all the component parts of love

in what is only a single part, — nor in finding that so many and so various loves are all united in the love of a woman, — manifold uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, staff, sceptre and idol, all in one club-stick. Love is a very compound thing. The intellectual part of my love I shall give to men, the mighty dead or the illustrious living; and determine to call a mere sensual instinct by as few fine names as possible. What do I lose?

Eulalia. Nay, I only think, what do I lose? and, one more word — which shall complete my instruction — does friendship go too? What of Luitolfo, the author of your present prosperity?

Chiappino. How the author?

Eulalia. That blow now called yours . . .

Chiappino. Struck without principle or purpose, as by a blind natural operation: yet to 290 which all my thought and life directly and advisedly tended. I would have struck it, and could not: he would have done his utmost to avoid striking it, yet did so. I dispute his right to that deed of mine — a final action with him, from the first effect of which he fled away, — a mere first step with me, on which I base a whole mighty superstructure of good to follow. Could he get good from it?

Eulalia. So we profess, so we perform!

Enter Ogniben. Eulalia stands apart.

Ogniben. I have seen three-and-twenty leaders of revolts. By your leave, sir! Perform?
What does the lady say of performing?

Chiappino. Only the trite saying, that we must

not trust profession, only performance.

Ogniben. She'll not say that, sir, when she knows you longer; you 'll instruct her better. Ever judge of men by their professions! For though the bright moment of promising is but a moment and cannot be prolonged, yet, if sincere in its moment's extravagant goodness, why, trust it and 310 know the man by it, I say — not by his performance; which is half the world's work, interfere as the world needs must, with its accidents and circumstances: the profession was purely the man's own. I judge people by what they might be, — not are, nor will be.

Chiappino. But have there not been found, too,

performing natures, not merely promising?

Ogniben. Plenty. Little Bindo of our town, for instance, promised his friend, great ugly Masaccio, once, "I will repay you!" — for a favor done him. So, when his father came to die, and Bindo succeeded to the inheritance, he sends straightway for Masaccio and shares all with him—gives him half the land, half the money, half the kegs of wine in the cellar. "Good," say you: and it is good. But had little Bindo found himself possessor of all this wealth some five years before — on the happy night when Masaccio procured him that interview in the garden with his pretty 330 cousin Lisa — instead of being the beggar he then was, — I am bound to believe that in the warm moment of promise he would have given away all the wine-kegs and all the money and all the land, and only reserved to himself some hut on a hill-top hard by, whence he might spend his life in looking and seeing his friend enjoy himself: he meant fully that much, but the world interfered.—To our business! Did I understand you

just now within-doors? You are not going to 340 marry your old friend's love, after all?

Chiappino. I must have a woman that can

sympathize with, and appreciate me, I told you.

Ogniben. Oh, I remember! you, the greater nature, needs must have a lesser one (—avowedly lesser — contest with you on that score would never do) — such a nature must comprehend you, as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward. Why, that were being not merely as great as yourself, but 350 greater considerably! Meantime, might not the more bounded nature as reasonably count on your appreciation of it, rather? — on your keeping close by it, so far as you both go together, and then going on by yourself as far as you please? Thus God serves us.

Chiappino. And yet a woman that could understand the whole of me, to whom I could reveal

alike the strength and the weakness —

Ogniben. Ah, my friend, wish for nothing so 360 foolish! Worship your love, give her the best of you to see; be to her like the western lands (they bring us such strange news of) to the Spanish Court; send her only your lumps of gold, fans of feathers, your spirit-like birds, and fruits and gems! So shall you, what is unseen of you, be supposed altogether a paradise by her, — as these western lands by Spain: though I warrant there is filth, red baboons, ugly reptiles and squalor enough, which they bring Spain as few samples of as possible. Do you want your mistress to respect your body generally? Offer her your mouth to kiss: don't strip off your boot and put your foot to her lips! You understand my humor by this time? I

help men to carry out their own principles: if they please to say two and two make five, I assent, so they will but go on and say, four and four make ten.

Chiappino. But these are my private affairs; what I desire you to occupy yourself about, is my public appearance presently: for when the 380 people hear that I am appointed Provost, though you and I may thoroughly discern — and easily, too — the right principle at bottom of such a movement, and how my republicanism remains thoroughly unaltered, only takes a form of expression hitherto commonly judged (and heretofore by myself) incompatible with its existence, — when thus I reconcile myself to an old form of government

instead of proposing a new one . .

Ogniben. Why, you must deal with people 390 broadly. Begin at a distance from this matter and say, - New truths, old truths! sirs, there is nothing new possible to be revealed to us in the moral world; we know all we shall ever know: and it is for simply reminding us, by their various respective expedients, how we do know this and the other matter, that men get called prophets, poets and the like. A philosopher's life is spent in discovering that, of the half-dozen truths he knew when a child, such an one is a lie, as the 400 world states it in set terms; and then, after a weary lapse of years, and plenty of hard-thinking, it becomes a truth again after all, as he happens to newly consider it and view it in a different relation with the others: and so he restates it, to the confusion of somebody else in good time. As for adding to the original stock of truths, — impossible! Thus, you see the expression of them is the grand business: - you have got a truth in your head

about the right way of governing people, and 410 you took a mode of expressing it which now you confess to be imperfeet. But what then? There is truth in falsehood, falsehood in truth. No man ever told one great truth, that I know, without the help of a good dozen of lies at least, generally uneonseious ones. And as when a child comes in breathlessly and relates a strange story, you try to eonjecture from the very falsities in it, what the reality was, - do not conclude that he saw nothing in the sky, because he assuredly did not see 420 a flying horse there as he says, — so, through the eontradietory expression, do you see, men should look painfully for, and trust to arrive eventually at, what you call the true principle at bottom. Ah, what an answer is there! to what will it not prove applicable? — "Contradictions? Of course there were," say you!

Chiappino. Still, the world at large may call it

inconsistency, and what shall I urge in reply?

Ogniben. Why, look you, when they tax you 430 with tergiversation or duplicity, you may answer — you begin to perceive that, when all's done and said, both great parties in the State, the advocators of change in the present system of things, and the opponents of it, patriot and antipatriot, are found working together for the common good; and that in the midst of their efforts for and against its progress, the world somehow or other still advances: to which result they contribute in equal proportions, those who spend their 440 life in pushing it onward, as those who give theirs to the business of pulling it back. Now, if you found the world stand still between the opposite forces, and were glad, I should conceive you: but

it steadily advances, you rejoice to see! By the side of such a rejoicer, the man who only winks as he keeps cunning and quiet, and says, "Let yonder hot-headed fellow fight out my battle! I, for one, shall win in the end by the blows he gives, and which I ought to be giving" — even he seems 450 graceful in his avowal, when one considers that he might say, "I shall win quite as much by the blows our antagonist gives him, blows from which he saves me — I thank the antagonist equally!" Moreover, you may enlarge on the loss of the edge of party-animosity with age and experience . . .

Chiappino. And naturally time must wear off such asperities: the bitterest adversaries get to discover certain points of similarity between each other, common sympathies — do they not?

460

Ogniben. Ay, had the young David but sat first to dine on his cheeses with the Philistine, he had soon discovered an abundance of such common sympathies. He of Gath, it is recorded, was born of a father and mother, had brothers and sisters like another man, — they, no more than the sons of Jesse, were used to eat each other. But, for the sake of one broad antipathy that had existed from the beginning, David slung the stone, cut off the giant's head, made a spoil of it, and after ate 470 his cheeses alone, with the better appetite, for all I can learn. My friend, as you, with a quickened eye-sight, go on discovering much good on the worse side, remember that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side! And when I profess no sympathy for the Goliaths of our time, and you object that a large nature should sympathize with every form of intelligence, and

"So I do; but preserve the proportions of my sympathy, however finelier or widelier I may extend its action." I desire to be able, with a quickened eye-sight, to descry beauty in corruption where others see foulness only: but I hope I shall also continue to see a redoubled beauty in the higher forms of matter, where already everybody sees no foulness at all. I must retain, too, my old power of selection, and choice of appropriation, to apply to such new gifts; else they only 490 dazzle instead of enlightening me. God has his archangels and consorts with them: though he made too, and intimately sees what is good in, the worm. Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and, so, ought to speak: I do justice to your own principles, that is all.

Chiappino. But you very well know that the two parties do, on occasion, assume each other's characteristics. What more disgusting, for instance, than to see how promptly the newly 500 emancipated slave will adopt, in his own favor, the very measures of precaution, which pressed soreliest on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has just escaped from? Do the classes, hitherto without opinion, get leave to express it? there follows a confederacy immediately, from which — exercise your individual right and dissent, and woe be to

you!

Ogniben. And a journey over the sea to you! That is the generous way. Cry—"Emanci- 510 pated slaves, the first excess, and off I go!" The first time a poor devil, who has been bastinadoed steadily his whole life long, finds himself let alone and able to legislate, so, begins pettishly, while

he rubs his soles, "Woe be to whoever brings any-

thing in the shape of a stick this way!" - you, rather than give up the very innocent pleasure of carrying one to switch flies with, — you go away, to everybody's sorrow. Yet you were quite reconciled to staying at home while the governors 520 used to pass, every now and then, some such edict as "Let no man indulge in owning a stick which is not thick enough to chastise our slaves, if need require!" Well, there are preordained hierarchies among us, and a profane vulgar subjected to a different law altogether; yet I am rather sorry you should see it so clearly: for, do you know what is to — all but save you at the Day of Judgment, all you men of genius? It is this: that, while you generally began by pulling down God, 530 and went on to the end of your life, in one effort at setting up your own genius in his place, — still, the last, bitterest concession wrung with the utmost unwillingness from the experience of the very loftiest of you, was invariably - would one think it? — that the rest of mankind, down to the lowest of the mass, stood not, nor ever could stand, just on a level and equality with yourselves. That will be a point in favor of all such, I hope and believe. Chiappino. Why, men of genius are usually 540 charged, I think, with doing just the reverse; and at once acknowledging the natural inequality of mankind, by themselves participating in the universal craving after, and deference to, the civil

superior rank.

Ogniben. Not I (always on your own ground and showing, be it noted!) Who doubts that, with

distinctions which represent it. You wonder they pay such undue respect to titles and badges of

a weapon to brandish, a man is the more for- 550 midable? Titles and badges are exercised as such a weapon, to which you and I look up wistfully. We could pin lions with it moreover, while in its present owner's hands it hardly prods rats. Nay, better than a mere weapon of easy mastery and obvious use, it is a mysterious divining rod that may serve us in undreamed-of ways. Beauty, strength, intellect — men often have none of these, and yet conceive pretty accurately what kind of advantages they would bestow on the pos- 560 sessor. We know at least what it is we make up our mind to forego, and so can apply the fittest substitute in our power. Wanting beauty, we cultivate good humor; missing wit, we get riches: but the mystic unimaginable operation of that gold collar and string of Latin names which suddenly turned poor stupid little peevish Cecco of our town into natural lord of the best of us—a Duke, he is now — there indeed is a virtue to be reverenced! 570

Chiappino. Ay, by the vulgar: not by Messere Stiatta the poet, who pays more assiduous

court to him than anybody.

Ogniben. What else should Stiatta pay court to? He has talent, not honor and riches: men naturally covet what they have not.

Chiappino. No, or Cecco would covet talent, which he has not, whereas he covets more riches,

of which he has plenty, already.

Ogniben. Because a purse added to a purse 580 makes the holder twice as rich: but just such another talent as Stiatta's, added to what he now possesses, what would that profit him? Give the talent a purse indeed, to do something with! But lo, how

we keep the good people waiting! I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you and which you are too modest to duly enforce. Come, to our main business: shall we ascend the steps? I am going to propose you for Provost to the people; they know your antecedents, 590 and will accept you with a joyful unanimity: whereon I confirm their choice. Rouse up! Are you nerving yourself to an effort? Beware the disaster of Messere Stiatta we were talking of! who, determining to keep an equal mind and constant face on whatever might be the fortune of his last new poem with our townsmen, heard too plainly "hiss, hiss, hiss," increase every moment. Till at last the man fell senseless: not perceiving that the portentous sounds had all the while been issuing 600 from between his own nobly clenched teeth, and nostrils narrowed by resolve.

Chiappino. Do you begin to throw off the mask?— to jest with me, having got me effectu-

ally into your trap?

Ogniben. Where is the trap, my friend? You hear what I engage to do, for my part: you, for yours, have only to fulfil your promise made just now within doors, of professing unlimited obedience to Rome's authority in my person. And I 610 shall authorize no more than the simple reestablishment of the Provostship and the conferment of its privileges upon yourself: the only novel stipulation being a birth of the peculiar circumstances of the time.

Chiappino. And that stipulation?

Ogniben. Just the obvious one—that in the event of the discovery of the actual assailant of the late Provost

Chiappino. Ha! 620 Ogniben. Why, he shall suffer the proper penalty, of eourse; what did you expect?

Chiappino. Who heard of this?

Ogniben. Rather, who needed to hear of this?

Chiappino. Can it be, the popular rumor never

reached you . . .

Ogniben. Many more such rumors reach me, friend, than I choose to receive; those which wait longest have best chance. Has the present one sufficiently waited? Now is its time for entry 630 with effect. See the good people crowding about yonder palace-steps — which we may not have to ascend, after all. My good friends! (nay, two or three of you will answer every purpose) who was it fell upon and proved nearly the death of your late Provost? His successor desires to hear, that his day of inauguration may be graced by the act of prompt bare justice we all anticipate. Who dealt the blow that night, does anybody know? 640

Luitolfo [coming forward]. I!

All. Luitolfo!

Luitolfo. I avow the deed, justify and approve it, and stand forth now, to relieve my friend of an unearned responsibility. Having taken thought, I am grown stronger: I shall shrink from nothing that awaits me. Nay, Chiappino — we are friends still: I dare say there is some proof of your superior nature in this starting aside, strange as it seemed at first. So, they tell me, my horse is 650 of the right stock, because a shadow in the path frightens him into a frenzy, makes him dash my brains out. I understand only the dull mule's way of standing stockishly, plodding soberly, suffering on occasion a blow or two with due

patience.

Eulalia. I was determined to justify my choice, Chiappino, — to let Luitolfo's nature vindicate itself. Henceforth we are undivided, whatever be our fortune.

Ogniben. Now, in these last ten minutes of silence, what have I been doing, deem you? Putting the finishing stroke to a homily of mine, I have long taken thought to perfect, on the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." To your house, Luitolfo! Still silent, my patriotic friend? Well, that is a good sign however. And you will go aside for a time? That is better still. I understand: it would be easy for you to die of remorse here on the spot and shock us all, 670 but you mean to live and grow worthy of coming back to us one day. There, I will tell everybody; and you only do right to believe you must get better as you get older. All men do so: they are worst in childhood, improve in manhood, and get ready in old age for another world. Youth, with its beauty and grace, would seem bestowed on us for some such reason as to make us partly endurable till we have time for really becoming so of ourselves, without their aid; when they leave us. 680 The sweetest child we all smile on for his pleasant want of the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it — would be rudely handled by that world's inhabitants, if he retained those angelic infantine desires when he had grown six feet high, black and bearded. But, little by little, he sees fit to forego claim after claim on the world, puts up with a less and less share of its good as his proper portion; and when

the octogenarian asks barely a sup of gruel and a 690 fire of dry sticks, and thanks you as for his full allowance and right in the common good of life, — hoping nobody may murder him, — he who began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him, — why, I say he is advanced, far onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder. And now — (ay, good-bye to you! He turns round the northwest gate: going to Lugo again? Good-bye!) — and now give thanks to God, the keys of the 700 Provost's palace to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home! I have known Four-and-twenty leaders of revolts.

NOTES

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

The Return of the Druses, Act I., opens upon an excited group of men who are exulting in the freeing of their people and the triumph of their religion. The day is dawning when their leader, Djabal, is to assume the incarnate divinity of the founder of the Druse religion, deliver their tribe from its bondage to the Knights of Rhodes, and lead it from exile in the Mediterranean island, which is the scene of the play, to the old home of the Druse people beneath the cedars of Lebanon.

While they exult, they begin to loot the hall of the Palace, quarrelling over their spoils, and fiercely telling of their hated Prefect's cruelty and lust, until Khalil enters and reproaches them for their paltry greed. Adjuring them to act with the caution and dignity befitting them as initiates in the Druse mysteries, he reminds them of their historic past, and the plan, not yet perfected, by which in exchange for the island they are about to leave, they are to secure the protection of Venice and foil the pending bargain of the knights to sell them to the Papal Nuncio. They retort that since Khalil and his sister Anael are supreme in Djabal's favor, and he can have whatever he asks, he need not begrudge them their lesser booty. Khalil's disinterestedness comes out in his reply, which checks them. All that he has asked is to be permitted to kill the Prefect. That deed, however, Djabal reserves for himself, after which, at noon, he will assume the godship. Meanwhile they are to hold the posts assigned them.

A Druse messenger entering announces the return from Rhodes of the unsuspecting Prefect, and in advance of him the Frank knight, Loys. At this return of Djabal's friend, Khalil expresses surprise, for he was the one knight worth saving and to spare him he was sent away. A second Druse messenger announces the approach of the vessel bearing the Papal Nuncio; a third, that the Venetian ships are coming in sight. In a rapture of excitement, Khalil is telling the people gathering about him of the approaching completion of the scheme, when Loys enters. In spite of the sudden silence he feels the general joy. He attributes it, at first, to the news he brings, that he has procured the dismissal of the Prefect and has been appointed in his stead, till he reflects that they can know nothing of this vet. He asks for Djabal, that he may tell him of it. Then he wonders at the home-feeling seizing him, a foreigner returning to dwell among this people, and is half ready to credit a story Djabal used to tell him of a Frank ancestor who allied himself with the Druses in the old crusading days in Syria. But apparently his ancestry has had less to do with it than Anael, the thought of whose dark eyes makes him so restless that he cannot wait longer for Djabal and goes in quest of him.

Act II. introduces Djabal, who enters questioning within himself the push of events which will force him to declare himself the re-incarnate Hakeem, for the sake of completing the task of his whole manhood. He persuaded Loys to pass his probation as a knight in the island, so that he could be helpful to him in gaining access to the Prefect; made himself powerful with his tribe by playing upon their credulity; used his skill to bring about the bargain with Venice and complete the plot to lead his people to Mount Lebanon; and now, for the first time, he rebels against the delusion of boasting any power but that belonging to him as a man, the son of the Druse Sheikhs, whom the Prefect had tried to extirpate, but who is saved to avenge the butchery of his family and his nation's wrongs. He is resolving to crown his work by publicly abjuring imposture,

when Khalil, entering, hails him as God-Hakeem, accepted by the whole Druse nation; announces that Prefect, Nuncio, and Venetian admiral are all upon their way to the island, and, last, that Anael desires to see him. This last is not least important to Djabal, for he recognizes Anael's influence upon him as the source of his sudden unwillingness to exalt himself falsely, and also of his fear, if he were to tell the tribe the simple truth, that he should not appear to advantage in her eyes. Turning to Khalil, he puts it to him why he, who had the will and ability to do all he has done, has never sought to deliver the Druses. Khalil answers that no appeal of his could rouse them. The faith in Hakeem alone united them, the fear of Hakeem alone prevented them from frustrating all, as he had just witnessed, by seeking some selfish prize. Djabal then bids him go announce him to Anael. To her alone, he thinks, as he goes out, may he confess the truth.

Anael then appears with her mother, who is helping her array herself in the ancient Druse costume, and whom she is questioning, over and over, about Djabal; how the divine change will come; how her mother hid him as a child, and saved him; how he returned as a man, unrecognized by them; how he heard her own yow never to wed but the one who should save her nation; how he had made himself known to them, at last, as their Sheikh's son and the predestined Hakeem who would work out all the events that had since come to pass. Her joy in being his bride is mixed with grief that she is unworthy of sharing in his divine exaltation, since she can feel no awe of him, and finds his merely human traits suffice her. As Djabal enters, she half confesses her trouble, but with such confidence, nevertheless, in his approaching change that he fears more than ever to tell her the truth, while she is, meanwhile, more than ever anxious to reveal the doubt visiting her ever since seeing Loys, that all she had accepted at first as signs of his divinity arises merely from such human

love as Loys might excite in one who loved him as she loves Djabal. As for Djabal, his tenderness for her drives him to think of another way out of his difficulty. To avoid falsity, and yet save her soul the shock he supposes it will be to her to give up the idea of the Hakeem, he will leave the island, foregoing his vengeance on the Prefect, the sole deed now requiring his hand, and so let her keep the faith that uplifts her. Lovs, the only one who could undeceive her, is out of the way, he says to himself, just as Khalil entering announces him, — the very man they both dread. To Anael his coming is a challenge to her to prove her doubts. To Djabal it is a threat of exposure and failure in his mission. To keep Loys away from the people, since a word about the Hakeem would rouse his scorn, he proposes that Anael shall greet his old friend before he meets him. She agrees to do it, taking it as a sign that he has divined her thoughts and is offering her an opportunity to test her doubts.

Act III. opens upon the interview of Loys with Anael. He has revealed his love for her, and she is bidding him leave her, yet with such confusion excited by his words, on account of her conscious comparison of him with Djabal, that Loys is misled. When he learns from her that she is vowed to wed him who saves her tribe from the Prefect, which he knows he has already done, he realizes only, although he is bound by his vows of knighthood not to marry, that the same day which was to see him take those vows may be the one to sever them. So, when Anael tells him that Djabal, whom he wanted to see, will soon be there, he feels that he cannot meet him yet, he must find the Prefect, see the Nuncio, save himself somehow from breaking faith. As he rushes away, Anael acknowledges to herself that for her Djabal is but a man whose love she balances with Loys' and chooses. Her probation failing then to assure her of Djabal's divinity, there is but one other desperate way

left her to test her faith.

Djabal returns to her, to bid her farewell, with his plan formed to entrust Khalil with the leadership and lure Loys to silence. She superstitiously asks him if he can read the unnamed thought that has been filling her soul. He assures her he cannot. Fired, then, with this secret way to test her faith in him, it is to her for the moment as if it were done, and with an outburst of love she begs him to embrace her, who is vowed not to embrace him till her tribe be saved. Djabal, overwhelmed, reminded that it is now his purpose to forego both the crowning act and its reward, falters, "My Anael, is the Prefect dcad?" Although he cannot guess it, this is to her a reproach that she who would die for her mother or her brother, has yet to meet death in a more awful shape for Djabal's sake. All she says clearly, however, of her desire to prove her faith merely makes him recur to his farewell. This, too, Anael supposes is due to her lack of faith in him, while of course he is only tortured with the necessity of parting from her before the Prefect can arrive and prevent his going. Khalil breaks in upon their cross-purposes to warn Djabal that the Prefect is close at hand, the posts manned, and all in readiness for him to strike his blow. Fate cries out. Djabal hurriedly settles the duty of each, giving Anael his ring as the sign to be given, when the Prefect is slain and the Venetians landed, for his guard to throw open the gates. They scparate.

The Prefect now enters, gayly ordering all his men back to the galleys. Now Loys is to take his place away from him, he has but to leave. He chuckles over the happy prospect, gradually letting the astonished Loys understand the connivance of the knights in his oppressions, and the service he has so unexpectedly rendered him in opening a way of escape with his spoils from his perilous fat-office. He assures Loys that he now enters the palace, thanks to him, for the first time in years without fearing assassination. The disillusioned Loys finds one ray of comfort from all this.

He will renounce his knighthood and throw in his lot with Anael's people; and with this in mind, he goes at

last to tell Djabal his news.

Act IV. reveals Djabal with his sword awaiting the light-hearted Prefect. He hears footsteps within, dashes the curtains aside, and discovers — Anael. The Prefect's blood is on her dagger. This was the secret test she had assigned herself. In exaltation she calls upon Djabal, now, to declare his divinity and hers. overcome with this result of his duplicity, can only tell her the truth. Her revulsion is extreme; but after a moment her love conquers. She will go with him and publish truth to the people and love him more than ever. But his pride draws back. She waits only to be assured that he intends to feign to be Hakeem, and leaves him. Loys rushes in to pour out his long-withheld news and his fresh news also, that he will not be a knight, but bccome a Druse, since he and Anael love each other. Before his tale is finished the Nuncio's guards enter with alarms of the Prefect's murder. They seize Djabal and accuse him. Loys defends him, till Djabal throws down the bloody dagger and acknowledges that their story of the conspiracy and the assumed incarnation as Hakeem is truc. But Loys will not believe that Anael and Khalil are mixed with it, and that she is Djabal's bride, and when the guards draw back, learning how perilous their own position is, and urge him to claim the protection Djabal offers, he scornfully refuses it and defies him.

To his contempt Djabal only replies that he will stab

himself if one Druse accuses him.

Act V. The Druses flock into the hall. The Nuncio comes forward with his guards, and adroitly does his best to shake the faith of the uninitiated Druses who have answered the summons Anael has prematurely given. They are wavering, when Khalil and his band of initiates enter with word that the Venetians are coming, which startling news still further quickens the Nuncio's wits, and he proceeds to undermine Djabal

by calling on him for miracles, and threatening the Druses with the punishment the Venetians will administer when they learn the truth. An outburst from Djabal shows his mettle, and the Druses close about him again till the Druse who warned the Nuncio is brought in veiled to bear witness against him. Khalil indignantly tears the veil away and reveals — Anael.

Loys, exulting that she alone was true, makes an impassioned appeal to her, and then summons Djabal to make his. But Djabal only makes quiet acknowledgment to Anael that he deserved her betrayal and submits to her punishment. He regrets, he says, yet is scarcely able to repent, a course that grew out of his love for her and the conflict of his Arab instinct and his Frank brain. He knows now that out of the clash his mere man's-nature rises strengthened, to love her as he never loved before. He awaits from her lips his doom, ready himself to execute it. Thinking she hesitates from pity, he helps her decision, calling aloud upon the people to draw near and hear the doom.

Thereupon, with one cry "HAKEEM!" as if the inner truth of the mystery of the human through love incarnating the divine were laid bare before her gaze, Anael falls dead. The Druses worship Djabal; Khalil piteously begs him to have mercy and restore his sister's life. And the Nuncio's scepticism loses strength to struggle with his flock as the Venetian trumpets sound, and the Druses shout to Djabal, "Exalt thyself!"

As if inspired, Djabal boldly scourges them with his scorn of their exactions, and reproaches them with what has actually been done for them. Anael and he shall henceforth, he tells them, be beyond their ken. Then, making them promise to follow Khalil to Lebanon, he puts them under Loys's protection, and, turning where Anael lies, stabs himself, and as the Venetian admiral enters, dies shouting, "At the Mountain, Druses!"

Act I. 3. Dread incarnate mystery: the Incarnation, the central religious idea of the Druses, is held in a very

subtile form. The unity of God, and the impossibility of comprehending his nature or assuming to designate his attributes, is their ground of faith. To suppose that he becomes flesh is not permissible, therefore; but only that manifestations of him appear from time to time, assuming a veil of flesh, as a man would put on a robe; and just as a man does not become that robe, so these different forms of manifestation do not become the Humanity of God, but that manifestation throughout all these forms or envelopes is essentially one, coeval with the Divinity of God. All Messiahs and religions arc accepted by the Druses as types more or less complete of the one true religion; and they hold that there have been ten incarnations or apparitions of the divine manifestation, including Hakeem, the last of these, and the founder of the Druse religion; but it is the Hakeem or one immutable essence which has taken all these forms.

4. To resume its pristine shape: the expected reappearance of the Hakeem in the form of the founder of the Druse faith, the Khalif Hakeem Biamr Allah. He belonged to the dynasty known as the Fatimites, from Fatima, Mohammed's daughter, and wife of Ali, whose leadership of the Faithful, after the death of Mohammed, was disputed by Ayesha, Mohammed's wife, and her supporting chiefs Abou Bekr, Othman, and Omar, who were successful in seating Moawia, first of the line of the Ommiades. These two parties represented, also, a spiritual division of the Mohammedans, the Druse faith growing ultimately out of the more mystical and spiritual interpretation of the Koran, and gaining valuable admixtures of Hellenic, Jewish, Christian, and Persian elements through the circumstances conducing to its evolution. Early in the ninth century, the Fatimite branch of the Mohammedans began to assert itself successfully against the ruling house, and took possession of Egypt, in 968, cstablishing their capital at Cairo. Hakecm was the first of the Fatimite Khalifs to be born there. He began his reign in 996, and in 1016 promulgated his new religion in the mosque at Cairo under the ministry of Darazi (who was afterwards sent to Lebanon to plant the new religion there, and who is sometimes supposed to have given the Druses their name), and of Hamze, a Persian mystic, who is believed by the Druses to be the manifestation of the first of God's creations, the Universal Intelligence, accompanying the manifestation of the Divinity in Hakeem.

5. The Khalif vanished erst: Hakeem disappeared in 1021. It is said that he rose at daybreak for his customary ride on his donkey, and on lcaving the palace embraced his mother, saying that according to his horoscope he should that day run a great risk, but that if he escaped he would live for eighty years. With two attendants he took the road to Mount Karafa, his favorite resort. Having reached the summit, he drew rein and looked up to the stars, saying, "We all belong to God, and shall all return to him." Suddenly striking his hands together, he cried, "Fatal sign, thou hast appeared then!" He never returned to Cairo, and various tales were told to account for his disappearance; among these, that his sister had him assassinated. This was likely, as he was rigorous against intemperance and sensuality, and particularly despotic in his ordinances against women, which his pleasure-loving sister resented. The Druse version of the occurrence is that he departed for a time to test the Faithful, and would come again to establish the true religion. Along with the insane and Nero-like acts which history records of this Khalif, other deeds are told which are creditable. He opened a college in Cairo which was free to the public, and founded a library which supplied paper, ink, and pens, as well as books, to all comers; and he handsomely rewarded scholars in all branches of law, astronomy, medicine, rhetoric, and grammar, for the public lectures which he had them give. He proclaimed tolcrance of other religions, and was austere in his own life, suggesting the possibility to the modern reader that his unpopularity and historical ill-fame may have been due to his moral superiority.

7. Red Mokattam's verge: the mountain Kharifa, of Mokattam Jebel, on the eastern bank of the Nile, near Cairo. Red with the rising sun when the Khalif dis-

appeared.

9. The Christian Prefect that enslaved . . . us sad Druse exiles: the oppressive rule of the Knights of Rhodes over Druse colonists who fled from Osman (see lines 86-90) to an island of the Sporades, seems to be an ingenious invention of Browning. An outbreak of the Druses against the Maronites, their Christian neighbors in Lebanon, took place in 1843, the date of the publication of the drama, and doubtless called Browning's attention especially to this strange Arabic people, an ethnological puzzle, doubted to be Semitic. Their mixed blood and faith, supplying a basis for an eclectic nature and religion, would be likely to interest him especially, and suggest to him that here was an opportunity to put in significant juxtaposition the European and the Oriental natures, and the Christian and Druse ideas of the Incarnation. The plot he invented still further betters this opportunity, and makes use of historic facts in a likely, although probably unhistoric way, as to minor details. The same Moslem uprising under the Moguls which drove the Christians, crusading Franks, and Knights Hospitallers from Jerusalem and Antioch in the thirteenth century, was, as a matter of fact, turned against the Druses, whose policy of tolerance had permitted them to live in Syria in friendly relations with the Christians when they were in power, but whose outward observance of the rites of Mohammedanism, which they interpret allegorically, was not acceptable to the Turkish conquerors. The Druses refused to build mosques and strictly observe the Koran, and took up arms in defence of themselves against the invaders. They were defeated and reduced to submission, and in time, pursuing the usual tenor of their way, returned to the isolated place and wealth they enjoy. But many families emigrated at this time; and this actual occurrence Browning makes use of, to settle them on an island under the protection of their old neighbors who were driven out of Palestine by the same enemy, but who were too strong not to take the opportunity to

oppress the Druse exiles.

20. The Druse Nation, warders on our Mount of the world's secret: as already indicated, the Druses claim to keep inviolate the inmost spiritualized religion, and especially as to the doetrine of the Incarnation, — of which all other religions more or less partaking of the truth, are considered but external types. They preserve the faith with the greatest seerecy, only the initiated Druses, called the *Ockals*, possessing knowledge of it. All are bound, however, to keep the following seven eommandments of Hamzé, whieli, indeed, bear witness to the superiority the Druses show: 1. "The unity of God, or the infinite oneness of Deity; 2. The essential exeellence of truth; 3. The law of toleration as to all men and women in opinion; 4. Respect for all men and women as to character and conduct; 5. Entire submission to God's decrees as to fate; 6. Chastity of body and mind and soul; 7. Mutual help under all conditions." The Druses believe that their religion may be allegorieally discovered in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and they treat with reverence the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Koran.

Copies in Arabic of the jealously guarded Druse writings were seeured for the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, in Paris; and of these Silvestre de Saey made use in his "Exposé de la Religion des Druses," published in 1828, and doubtless eonsulted by Browning. C. H. Churchill's "Mount Lebanon," 3 vols., London, 1853, seems to be

the best English authority.

38. Eight-point cross of white flame: the Knights of Rhodes were a white eross of eight points on a black

ground, known as the Rhodian Cross. Earlier they wore a plain white cross on a red ground. They took Rhodes in 1310; before that being known as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

86. Osman: or Othman I., founder of the present Turkish Empire, originally a petty chieftain in Bithynia. He invaded Nicæa in 1299, and took possession of the whole country in 1331, establishing the Mogul supremacy.

103. A race self-vowed to . . . warfare with his hordes: when called Knights of St. John, they installed themselves (1042) at Jerusalem, holding it against the

Moslems.

- 116. Sheikhs able to thwart, etc.: of the Sheikhs, or Emirs, of the Druses, Churchill says: "The names of a long line of Emirs occur in the Arabic manuscripts, who excelled, some as poets, theologians, and grammarians; others as astrologers, artificers, and historians, making large collections of books," and multiplying them by beautiful penmanship. Reading and writing was common, even among the women, the Druse harcms being remarkable for their superiority over other Oriental women.
- 132. Patriarch: a church dignitary, superior to archbishop in rank.

152. Candia: now Crete, bought by Venice, 1194.

177. Nuncio: the Pope's ambassador, or agent, in this case sent to be bishop and governor.

217. A Crossed-keys' flag: the insignia of the Pope, the

keys of heaven and hell held by Peter's line.

284. Rennes: the chief city of Bretagne, now the capital of the Ile Vilaine district in France.

291. Bretagne: the province of Brittany, in the north-

west of France.

319. Pro fide: for the faith.

359. Some Count Dreux: to the Chinese, Persian, Arabic, Egyptian, Jewish, and Hellenic strains of blood and faith ascribed to the Druses, the Frank and

Christian strain is added by a tradition, which has been questioned, and said to have been invented in the sixteenth century. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, in his paper on this drama in the "Boston Browning Society Papers," speaks of it as "anachronistic as used by Browning," apparently forgetting that if it be assumed to be true, it would have been placed in the past by the speaker here. Browning's use of it as an old tale in which the fancy is tempted to believe is a clever compounding with scholarship for a realistic touch.

360. Bouillon's war: the first Crusade, led by Godfrey, Duke of Bouillon (1060–1100), who took Antioch and Jerusalem, calling himself "Defender of the Holy Sep-

ulchre." See Tasso, "Jerusalem Delivered."

II. 81. Sweet cane: Acorus calamus. — Lilith: Adam's first wife, according to Oriental and Talmudic tradition.

166. Incense from a Mage-king's tomb: referring to the Oriental superstition that the ashes of magicians exhale perfume revealing tombs where treasures are hid.

177. Saffron vestures: saffron dyes were highly esteemed by the Orientals, as by the early Greeks, and the color sacred to ceremonial use.

183. Khandjar: Eastern dagger.

III. 172. Some new expiatory form: an allusion to the Oriental belief in the transmigration of evil souls into the bodies of beasts after death, pure souls passing into angelic shapes.

.271. San Gines by Murcia: near the Mediterrancan bay of Murcia, a few miles from Cartagena in Spain.

286. Bezants: Byzantine gold coins.

300. Red-cross rivals: the Knights Templar, an order vowed also to the service of the Holy Sepulchre, founded in 1118 and suppressed 1312. Called Templars because they occupied an apartment in the Christian palace at Jerusalem near the Temple. Browning's "Heretic's Tragedy" deals with an episode in their history resulting from the Church's displeasure in their sympathies with the Orientals.

IV. 64. Bahumid: Moktana Bohaeddin, a Druse who re-stated and reduced to writing the principles of Hamzé.

294. Mahound: the form of Mohammed's name used

by the Christian Crusaders.

- Act V. 8. The office of Hamza: that of manifesting the Universal Intelligence accompanying the manifestation of the Divine in the Hakeem, of minister to the God.
 - 12. Copht: an Egyptian from the old city of Coptus.
 42. The third Fatemite: Hakeem or Biamrallah was

42. The third Fatemite: Hakeem or Biamrallah was the third of the Fatimite Khalifs.

57. Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi: the Greek text of Acts ii. 10, "Strangers of Rome, Jews, and

proselytes."

155. Truncheon: from the same root as thyrsus, meaning a stalk or staff, and a sign of office, here on behalf of the Church.

379. Cedar-blossom: a token of Lebanon, from the

famous cedars growing there.

392. St. Mark . . . the Lion: the patron saint of Venice, whose emblem was the lion, which was accordingly the emblem of Venice; hence the name of the famous square in Venice and the statues of the lions.

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon. Act I. is introduced by a scene representing a group of men-servants crowding at a lodge-window to get a good view of Lord Mertoun and his train, who are entering their master's mansion near by. They gossip over the cause of the Earl's visit,—his suit for the hand of Lord Tresham's sister, comment on the way the house-servants play their part in the formalities, and chaff the only one among their number who shows no eagerness to see the ceremonies nor to rejoice with them in this gala-day, although he has been one of the most faithful retainers of the house, and is especially favored by the young Lady Mildred.

The scene next passes to the mansion itself, where Lord Tresham is welcoming the Earl. The young man proffers his name and fortune with due formality but without emphasis, treating these externals as incidental matters, and asking that to his true self Lady Mildred's hand may be given. His frank and high-minded speech commends him peculiarly not only to Lord Tresham, but to his cousin Guendolen, about to marry his brother Austin, and to whom she comments aside, throwing upon the scene the light of her penetration as well as giving it the wit and grace of a little by-play. Tresham in his reply expresses his propossessions in the Earl's favor, but reminds him that his sister's hand is hers to give or refuse. Mertoun pressing him to say if he may have his word if she grant hers, Tresham draws out the admission that he has chanced to catch a glimpse of the lady, and knows how beautiful she is, Tresham thereupon commenting that he cannot know how beautiful are her heart and mind, and showing his own peculiar fondness and estcem for his sister. Although to control her is out of the question, he says, she has ever of her own motion anticipated him in the satisfaction of his desires for her, and he can only say that his own heart is ready to urge Mertoun's suit with her. Reassured of the brother's favor, after arranging that the lady appoint a day when he may wait upon her, Mertoun The sole criticism Austin and Guendolen agree in making upon him is his foolishness in the solicitude he showed to please the brother instead of the bride herself; but Tresham is altogether delighted with him, and coaxes Guendolen to persuade Mildred to set the very next day for receiving him.

In Mildred's own chamber that evening Guendolen is considerately offcring the freest gratification to the young girl's supposed curiosity about her handsome young suitor; but although there is no trace of opposition, and a tell-tale exactitude of knowledge is called forth as to the color of his hair, she shows no disposition

to avail herself of her opportunity to ask questions, and, on the plea of weariness, begs to be alone. Her relief when her eousin goes is unmistakable, and as she lifts the small lamp hanging in front of the stained-glass window, so that its rays may fall through a purple pane, it is not long before the window is softly opened and a young man's voice is heard singing a love-song in a low tone. He throws off his slouched hat and long cloak as he enters. It is the Earl, joyous with the result of his meeting with Tresham. The dialogue between Mildred and the young man soon reveals that they have secretly known and loved each other, and that he is eager to eonsummate their union publiely without betraying the intimaey which has followed upon the chance meeting in Tresham's Park of the motherless girl and the romantie boy. But Mildred shrinks, even more than he, from the deception this involves, and the part of virgin purity she must assume. She almost doubts her lover's reassurances of the honor in which he holds her, and is only dissuaded by her love for him from abandoning all attempt to gain a happy future life together, so apprehensive is she of the evil their past will work them. They part fixing their last secret meeting for the following night.

Act II. opens upon Tresham agitatedly leading Gerard, the sullen old retainer of the opening seene, into his library, where he shuts the door and orders him to repeat eircumstantially the tale he has just been telling him of seeing a man enter Lady Mildred's ehamber, at midnight, for at least a month past. He tells his story over; how he first saw him leaving the chamber in broad moonlight, deseending the yew-tree, and how he always waits before entering for a signal from inside — the lamp lifted to the purple pane. Gerard meets Tresham's suspicious questions and curt interruptions with details, and with so much reluctance and affectionate shamefaeedness that the struggle he has had between his loyalty to the house he and his

fathers have served and his devotion to his young mistress is obvious, and his evidence against her the more convincing. Tresham, left alone, is stunned by the blow, and incapacitated to see his way out. As Guendolen enters, he pretends to be absorbed in a book, but does not succeed in blinding her clear eyes to his misery. She hits at once, half jocosely, but half seriously, upon the core of the difficulty, that what she would fain hope has come to pass, — that he has found some blot in the Earl's 'scutcheon. She has come to tell him of her visit to Mildred's room the night before, and to bring him the assurance that Mildred will meet the Earl as soon as he desires. Tresham breaks in to bid Mildred to come to him at once, afterwards covering Guendolcn's surprise at his authoritative manner with some pretence of just having found in an old book the Italian passage Mildred and he were hunting for. When Mildred enters she notices that the book he holds is Latin, and she meets her brother's wild talk with a foreboding heart, finally, herself bidding him speak plainly. To his question she replies without a word in self-defence, and only by expressing her readiness to endure any punishment and her eagerness to die. She will not tell the name of the man. Tresham, smitten with shame and grief, is ready to love and shield her, if he could see any way to reconcile with her acknowledgment of guilt the message sent by her order to summon the Earl to come on the morrow. But when she replies that she will still receive him, as she said, with a furious burst of indignation, he calls aloud for Austin and Guendolen, and in their presence curses and denounces her not merely as a sly wanton, loving yet faithful to her low bond, but as one who would inveigle an unconscious, trusting youth into union with one he falsely supposes to be chaste and good. As he rushes out, and Mildred falls, swooning, Austin is about to follow, till with an outburst of spirited loyalty to Mildred, Guendolen recalls him to her side. She reminds him that he, a

soldier, is vowed to fight for his king, right or wrong; and she declares that he would be unworthy to be beheld by the meanest dog that would faithfully follow him were he hooted at and disgraced before a crowd, if he, realizing what he did, should forsake a death-white woman whom he could help, "let alone a sister, let alone a Mildred." With Guendolen's assurance that two friends are ready to love her and believe in her, Mildred softens a little. Guendolen bids Austin leave them till she calls him, and then lovingly invites and tempts Mildred's confidence. She still withholds the name, but is trapped into confessing how much she loves him, and when she is asked how then she could permit them to talk to her of the Earl, her evasion, "There is a cloud around me," is met by Guendolen's sudden intuition that Lord Mertoun and her lover are the same. After this she gains further assurance of it adroitly by waking Mildred's fears for him. She calls Austin, who returns saying that Thorold has gone. They take Mildred to her room, and setting out to find Tresham seek to forestall the evil they all fear.

Act III. Tresham, wandering through the woods and over the grounds trying in vain to lose himself, brings up once more beneath the yew-tree before Lady Mildred's window. As midnight strikes, he remembers the tryst kept there, and attributes to woods and river the fatal force that lures him there to wait the lover's coming. Mertoun enters heavily cloaked. He waits below until the light is moved and shines out at the purple pane, and then prepares to ascend the yew-tree. enraged Tresham stops him, and with his hand gripping his throat orders him out into the moonlight. Mertoun is first to recognize his foe, who demands that he declare himself. Mertoun begs Tresham not to insist; but he is inexorable, his indignation redoubling when Mertoun throws off his disguises. Raging at the deception they have practised, and deaf to Mertoun's entreaties to forbear for Mildred's sake, he forces the younger man to fight; but it is only a show of resistance. He soon falls. Too late, Tresham hears the whole piteous story from Mertoun's dying lips of his romantic admiration for him as the ideal gentleman, of his longing to ally himself with him, of his desire to right as well as could be the wrong unwittingly done him, and of his deep love for Mildred. He bids Tresham tell her that his last words were, "I love her," and Gerard, Austin, and Guendolen barely enter before he dies.

The closing scene shows Mildred in her room in a stupor of grief, waiting vainly for her lover's coming. She cries to heaven to break the hideous apathy by any means or any messenger, when Tresham enters. He is sad and gentle now, acknowledging that he took upon himself that morning an office not his to take, and he begs his sister to forgive him for his words to her. Startled at the change in his manner, she falters at first, then, starting up, dcmands of him why Mertoun has not come to her, and dashing aside his mantle points to his empty scabbard, exclaiming that he has murdered him. Must she pardon that, too? She does. She is able to think how very wretched he must be. She forbids him to tell her Mertoun's last words. She knows them, and expects death will soon permit her to take them from his own lips. Facing heaven herself, she does not indeed forgive, but blesses her brother, and, falling on his neck, she calls on Henry Mcrtoun to confirm the love she gives from him. She dies with her arms about Tresham, as Guendolen and Austin enter in time to prevent him from falling, under the influence of the poison he has taken, and to hear his last words: "Vengeance is God's, not man's. Remember me!"

4. Poursuivant: advance messenger or herald, from the French poursuivre, to follow along with; hence a

follower or attendant.

13. Bravery: showy dress and equipment.

44. A cast of Swedish hawks: a couple of hawks; cast being the term, in the technical language of falconry,

for the two birds cast or flung off together into the air in hunting, the original sense of "to cast" being "to fling."

45. A leash of greyhounds: three, held in line by one

leash or thong.

59. Proper: comely.

93. No herald more: the office of the herald being to arrange all the minutiæ of public ceremonial occasions.

Sc. ii. 16. He's the king's: he serves the king, belongs

to the army.

59. Thicks: thickets, an old English form of the

word.

60. Eyass: a young hawk, derived from the French niais, callow, or half-fledged. Shakespeare uses the word literally, and also with reference to the young of birds, in "Hamlet," ir. 2. 355.

127. Faith give fraud the mercy-stroke: let sincerity put an end to fooling. The mercy-stroke was the

quietus or dcath-stroke after torturc.

130. Blazon: the heraldic device or bearings of a coat

of arms.

133. Mildred is fourteen, remark: Dr. Rolfe and others have criticised Browning for making Mildred Juliet's age, the precocious maturity of Italian blood being supposed unnatural for an English girl. As to the point that an English lord would not arrange for the marriage of a girl of fourteen, it can be answered that only two generations ago in this country marriages at fifteen and sixteen, although perhaps exceptional, were not unknown, and customs in England in the early part of the cightcenth century afford similar cases. As to the lore with which she is imbued, if it is remembered that a fond brother so speaks of her, who apparently devoted much time to her in his library and who read with her (see Act II.), there is no difficulty which Mildred's exceptional nature and advantages could not explain. Tresham's account of her (I. ii. 83), "Control's not for this lady," and Guendolen's climax (II. 340), "let alone a Mildred," with other indications throughout, contribute towards a portraiture of an unusual and yet an

unworldly-wise and girlish nature.

Sc. iii. 25. The Conqueror: William the Conqueror, who invaded England in 1066, and to whom the noble families of England go back to date their pedigrecs and titles.

27. Bow-hand or the arrow-hand: the left hand, which holds the bow, or the right, which sets the arrow.

46. Paladins: knights, so called, from the Italian

paladino, palace attendants of rank.

67. That fair dame whose garter slipped down: the Countess of Salisbury, who is said to have dropped her garter while dancing at a ball; the King of England, Edward III., picking it up and noticing that some of the courtiers laughed, restored it to the Countess, saying, "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (evil be to him who thinks evil). He afterward instituted the Order of the Garter, with this for the motto, as an incentive to chivalry among his knights; and the order still remains one of the first in fame in Europe.

116. Expressless: not to be expressed, a word of

Browning's coinage.

150. Some cursed fount that should spirt water, and spouts blood: see Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," ii. 2. 76.

187. Diamond scales: sensitively poised scales, such as are used to weigh diamonds and precious gems.

203. Bower: private room or chamber.

217. Fight-mark: the device or favor worn in a warrior's crest, and by which he was known in battle. This form of the phrase is Browning's.

Act II. 43. Pale: fence.

73. Hind: peasant, from Anglo-Saxon hine-man, a farmer.

113. No longer back than Arthur's time: Guendolen goes as far back as to the King Arthur of legend to pretend ironically that this is a recent date to such a treasurer of honorable pedigrees as Tresham.

150. Latin surely . . . here's a line, etc.: Ovid, Metamorphoses, vi.

180. The turtie's voice, "Arise, and come away":

Solomon's Song, ii. 10-13.

277. Bacchant: a votary of Bacchus, the god of wine and joy.

313. Losels: worthless fellows, lose-alls.

Act III. 23. Surcoat: a coat worn over armor, from French sur, over, cotte, coat.

24. Wimple: a kind of plaited hood.

219. Like some fabled crime . . . lets loose a Fury: the allusion to the Greek tragedies, such as the Oresteia of Æschylus, in which the avenger of the sin of the house is pursued by the Erinnyes or Furies, is appropriately put in the mouth of Tresham, the proud avenger of a blot in his ancestral escutcheon, and who now fancies that the ancient trees his fathers knew have let loose upon him such a Fury as pursued Orestes.

223. Antiphony: an anthem chanted in verses respon-

sively.

Sc. ii. 4. Diffused: accented on the first syllable, as often in Shakespeare and other elder English poets, when the verb is used adjectively.

102. Had gleamed some inlet: an inversion of subject

and vcrb, "some inlet had gleamed."

137. Foredone: overcome, old English; "done for" in modern speech.

139. Masque: masquerading company, or band of

actors.

150. Gules: red, the name of the color in heraldry. Blood overspreading the escutcheon and washing away the blot.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

Columbe's Birthday. Act I. The centre of interest, at the opening scene, is a letter which Guibert, one of the courtiers, is reading, while the others gather curiously about him. The news it brings apparently concerns

the Duchess, and Guibert's reluctance to acquaint her with it is so strong that he is proposing to throw up the office by virtue of which he must be the one to present this paper to her. As he tosses it down, Maufroy, the youngest of the courtiers, unable to contain his curiosity, picks it up and reads aloud enough to show its purport. It is from Prince Berthold, and announces that he is coming that day, with approval of Pope, Emperor, and Kings of Spain and France, to lay claim to the Duchy of Juliers, as its rightful owner, under the Salic law. This news that Colombe, whom they had crowned on her birthday, just one year ago, with profusion of compliment and loving ceremony, has no longer any power, throws the little circle into a panic of selfishness. How to get out of telling Colombe is Guibert's trouble. Clugnet's solicitude is to do it in a way to serve himself. Gaucelme's anxiety is by means of it to ingratiate himself with the new master. They notice the emptiness of the audience chamber, crowded a year ago. They learn that one suitor is waiting there, who has a petition he is eager to present, and who named Guibert as having promised his influence to admit him. As this man enters impetuously, forcing his way past the sentries, and making himself known as Valence, the advocate of Cleves, whose wrongs he would urge the Duchess on her birthday to redress, and as Guibert is recognizing in him the lawyer whose skill once restored his estate to him, Gaucelme whispers a suggestion. Here is the chance to dispose of Prince Berthold's letter. Guibert hesitates, but finally arranges with Valence to admit him to make his plea as fully as he likes, on condition that he gives the Duchess that paper, saying he is bidden to present it to her.

Act II. reveals the Duchess with her waiting woman, who, out of her love for her mistress, is doing all she can to delay her from beginning her birthday reception, lest she realize too brusquely by the change in the homage paid her how her fortune has changed. Colombe her-

self suspects it while she hides it, resenting being summoned to the throne, through no desire of hers, only to be unseated, and defiantly holding to her prerogatives. The eourtiers enter, reassuring her with the usual ceremonials; Valence stands rapt with the pleasure of again beholding the lady whom he saw the year before when on her birthday eoronation progress through Cleves to her palaee. As Guibert introduces him to her attention, he spurs himself to think only of Cleves, and he makes a frank and moving appeal to her on behalf of the weavers and spinners, of whose wrongs he brings a formal recital. The Duchess thanks him, and asks for the paper which he is about to give her, when he remembers his promise to present Guibert's paper, and explaining that he had so agreed, presents that one. The Duehess, on reading it, turns reproachfully to the courtiers, and submitting with dignity, takes off her eoronet. So soon as Valence sees the trick they have played upon him, an outburst of indignation at the outrage he has unwittingly done against the lady is sueeeeded by a challenge, which Guibert springs forward to accept, the courtiers holding him back, and reminding him that he is a noble and may not meet the elothier's spokesman. The irony of the Duchess's comment at this brings Guibert on his knees before her, protesting that because of their love for her they could not bear to present it, and it seemed good, therefore, to make a "nameless man," who was ignorant of its eontents, its bearer.

Valence has already so borne himself that the Duchess is disposed to resent so slighting an estimate of him, and when he now ealls upon her to abjure her rule over such ereatures as these of the court and put trust in the loyalty of the people, she meets it by setting the coronet upon her head again, returning Berthold's missive with contempt, and half playfully yet with queenliness taking away from her wavering courtiers their badges of office, and constituting her one loyal subject, Valence,

as Marshal, Chancellor and Chamberlain in their stead. Amid expressions of admiration from Guibert and the Court in general for their Duchess's spirited action and Valence's disinterested valor, the Prince's arrival is announced. From their temporary seizure of esteem for the virtue they lack, they lapse into agitated discussion of the best way to welcome the new ruler. Valence alone is summoned to the Duchess to serve her in her need.

Act III. introduces Berthold and his friend, Melchior. who comments cynically on the ambitious train of conquests which occupies the Prince and in which the possession of Juliers is but a passing step. Berthold explains that it is an important onc, however, and that once it seemed to him the summit of desire, so that while a boy trying to gain from foreign courts some interest in his claims, he had dreamed he might attain it by gaining the hand of Lady Colombe. Melchior's opinion is that if he himself unaided had pressed his way along at the little Court towards such a fruition as this, it would have exercised his powers more happily than the way he has taken, whose sanction rests, not on mind now, but on the physical force embodied in the potentates he has won over to his design. Berthold questions there being any mind power to cope with in Juliers, and as the courtiers enter, Melchior is retorting that he has himself prescribed the manner of his reception in bringing troops against the city; mind has departed, doubtless, and only such flesh and blood as is about to front him now in the shape of these smug courtiers, find his argument through force a strong one. Melchior goes out, bent upon the book-domain he is engaged in conquering, leaving Berthold musing over his criticism of the material course his ambition has chosen, and also over a certain little adventure in mere loving he once undertook, comparing the two, and concluding that success and failure mean the same in either. Meanwhile the courtiers are filing in and taking their

places about him. Their proffer of loyal service he receives thanklessly, since they can scarcely choose to do otherwise, and Guibert is keen enough to see the poor figure their drifting policy makes them cut in comparison with the self-determined course of Valence. When Berthold understands that they do not represent the Duchess, he is still more contemptuous of them, and tells them that his sole interest is in the reply the Duchess has to make. Guibert answers, despite the outcries of the obsequious courtiers, that the Duchess has scorned and defied his claim. Berthold is startled; for he has preceded his soldiers, until that moment, seeing only assurance that all were eager to forsake the sinking for the rising power. Recurring to Melchior's words, he conceives himself to be about to face the subtler force of mind, and he remembers that in the old love-affair he was recalling a moment before, he had failed, through not taking account of the subtler forces of human nature. The Duchess and Valence enter. Berthold asks her whom she empowers to speak for her. She refers him to Valence, who, admitting that she is alone, adds that therein she finds her strength, the people of Cleves holding with her, moreover, and, though the Prince subdue them and be their despot, they will never choose him as their Duke. Berthold receives this answer with respect, only proffering the papers that prove his claim in reply, and asking that the Duchess may pronounce upon their worth. As he goes, the courtiers whisper together over the scene, watching with envy the love budding between Valence and the Duchess. She decrees that he shall look over the papers, judge the Prince's claim, meet the Prince that night, and afterwards herself. She then withdraws with the most unmistakable expression of her confidence in him. Valence, left alone, keys himself up to meet worthily the crucial test before him, to give a dis-interested answer, in case Colombe prove of right to be Duchess and no mate for him.

Act IV. discloses the envious eourtiers discussing the situation from a point of view made elear to them by the Chaneellor, that if Colombe marry a subject she will not ennoble Valence, but lose her right to Juliers. They propose to tell the Prince that her marriage with Valence will insure him the duehy, and they go to arrange the details of the disclosure, as Valence enters with Berthold's eredentials. He finds them incontestable, and ean scarcely contain his joy in the prospect that, without any swerving from the path of honor, he may indulge his love for Colombe, when Berthold enters. He comes before the advocate can have had time to aequaint her with his decision, in order to propose a more amieable way of settling the disputed elaim by offering her his hand. To that offer, instead of to his claim which he withdraws, would he have the lady's answer that night. Valence, searcely recovered from his consternation when the Prince leaves him, has barely time to question his own heart in face of this unexpected test of his faith in her, when the Duchess enters. She guesses from his manner that what she feared is true, her rights prove void. Valence launches out into an eloquent description of the Prince's lot, and the spiritual worth of the worldly power he may wield when he shall reach the goal of his aim and become Emperor. Colombe has dreamed of such a fortune, he finds, and of being allied with it; whereupon he declares that this fortune is hers to realize through Berthold. Then she, seeretly testing Valence and delighting in the honor and fairness of his presentation of Berthold's offer, takes it for granted that the Prince loves her. Valence, with strict truth, here as before, deelares he did not say so. If he had offered both love and power, he would scarcely dare desire, for the world's sake, that she refuse. But his aet shows the love which he did not affirm, she suggests. This pushes him to deelare it is not love, because he (Valenee) knows what it is to love. Gradually encouraging and questioning him concerning this

love of his which has given him such insight, she enables him to declare himself to her without revealing herself to him. Although in her soul rejoieing in the plea he finally makes for mere love against power, she only answers formally that he is to say that she has received the Prinee's message and prepares her answer. He withdraws disconcerted. The Duchess, left alone, expresses playfully her jubilant pleasure in being thus unexpectedly queen of the situation, reserving her deci-

sion till she has proved Berthold's nature, too.

Act V. opens upon a dialogue of Berthold with Melehior, who is probing the Prince's offer to find how much of tenderness instead of policy inspires it, and eounselling him that he will prosper best in his suit if he put the lover in the foreground instead of the Emperor. When the Duehess enters, the Prince rests his case frankly on mutual esteem and advantage, but is unpleasantly startled by the suggestion the courtiers make, who break in upon him at this point, to tell him that she forfeits the Duchy in his favor, anyway, if she marry a subject, and that, since Valence could have no other motive for such defence of the Duchess as his than love's reward, their marriage is an obvious fact. Again the eourtiers unexpectedly find themselves in disfavor with Berthold, who resents their prattle about one who is their lady, as he declares, to their surprise. To the Duehess, then, who appreciates his generosity, and even suspects him of being eapable of letting her keep her duely and wed as she likes, he turns, urging that she write upon his eredentials her admission of them as Colombe of Ravestein, or, as his wife, leave them unadmitted, and so let all end. The Duchess agreeing, the Prince takes his success for granted, and Valence, who holds the paper, is sent for. Melchior, meanwhile, gets the Prince's permission to work out for himself the experiment of testing whether the Empire or Love should win, and stops Valence long enough to try the nobility of his love, by explaining to him that a

rumor has reached them that the lady's hand is considered to be due him for his service to her. If this be true, the Prince would not only withdraw his suit, but the lady be compelled to accept that of Valence, wherefore his witness is desired. Which shall it be, her good or his? Valence answers for hers, making no claim upon her save as she wills, and, speaking for himself alone, declares that love is self-purifying and uplifting, finding within itself its own recompense, and desiring only the good of the beloved one. Handing, then, the paper to the Duchess, she subscribes it, and, turning to Valence, offers him, as befits a birthday, and a wedding-day as hers is too, any gift he desires. Berthold confirms this, declaring, for her sake and his own, he shall have whatever he asks. After a struggle he presents the petition of Cleves to the Prince, asking him to redress its wrongs, and, receiving Berthold's promise, is preparing to retire, when Colombe bids him finish his task and read aloud that which she has written on the paper. He reads: "I take him — give up Juliers and the world. This is my Birthday." Berthold applauds the choice, owning that he needs the duchy more than they do; yet he turns wearily to his successes, while they are too much absorbed in each other to listen to him.

I. 11. Our old Duke, etc.: this incident seems to be an imagination of the poet, which he has found a place for in the environment furnished by the historical disputes over the succession to the Duchy of Cleves. Duke John William of Cleves died in 1609, without leaving a direct heir. His domain, including the formerly separate duchies of Jülich, Cleves, and Berg, and territory on both sides of the Lower Rhine, was claimed by not less than six competitors, the Emperor sending the Archduke Leopold of Hapsburg to hold it for him, and the Kings of France and Spain and the people of Holland concerning themselves about it in the interest of Catholic or Protestant contestants. These disputes were settled in 1614 by the treaty of Xanten, giving the

duchy to Sigismund, elector of Brandenburg, who had married the late Duke's niece. Browning's supposition on which the plot is based, that the Duke had concealed his child to shield her better and secure her reign surreptitiously, is conceivably historical, though not a matter of record.

14. Castle Ravestein: an old castle in the little town of the same name on the river Meuse in North Brabant.

- 17. Juliers: the French form of the name of Jülich, chief town of Aachen, on the right bank of the river Roer, sixteen miles northeast of the town of Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle. It was supposed to have been founded by Julius Cæsar, and to be the Juliæum mentioned in the "Antonini Itinerarium." Until recently, when its fortifications were demolished, it was a fortress of the second class.
- **34.** Gentles: the use of this word as a noun, for "gentlefolk," is Elizabethan. See Shakespeare's "Love's Labor's Lost," iv. 1.

72. Guilder: a Dutch coin worth about 40 cents.

84. Salic law: an ancient law, one clause of which, relating to the inheritance of landed property, excluded females from heirship in land, and was construed, also, to exclude them from thrones. It is supposed to have originated with the Salian Franks, the name being derived from the river Yssel, called Isalia in the Middle Ages; in the Rhenish province, on the borders of France and Holland, which is the scene of this play, it is in place appropriately, as a factor in the plot invented by the poet.

129. Coil: turmoil. Scc "Tempest," i. 2. 207.

- 163. Pill and poll: to peel and shear, an Elizabethan phrase.
- 175. Crowding: a misprint of the editions of 1885 and 1889, for crowning, as, in the earlier edition, Browning wrote to Dr. Rolfe.

177. Cappings: that is, taking off their caps.

207. Halberts: or halberds, an ancient weapon used

for both cutting and thrusting, a combination of spear and battle-axe.

222. Cleves: formerly the capital of the duchy of that name, a city two miles from the Rhine and near the Dutch frontier. Its old castle, still standing in the midst of the town, the Schwanenberg, is the scene of the Lohengrin story of the Swan and the Knight, celebrated in Wagner's opera. It is still a manufacturing town, having linen, cotton, silk, and woollen industries, and a population of 10,000.

254. Pentecost: the Jewish feast, following the Passover, the Christian equivalent of which, Whitsuntide, is

frequently called Pentecost.

275. The Pope's cross: the badge of membership in the order of knighthood conferred by the Pope.

297. From Cleves to Juliers: about sixty miles.

342. Sursum corda: "Lift up your hearts," the versicle used by the priest when he prepares to consecrate the bread and wine in the Mass or Communion.

353. Marcasite: a mineral product which is a bi-

sulphide of iron.

II. 75. Devoir: duty, from the French verb devoir,

to owe.

165. Church-flowers: flowers gathered to adorn the altar and be used in the service of religious ceremony, instead of the life of nature. Colombe has been plucked away from her normal life, similarly, to adorn civic rites.

171. God's Mother: the Madonna, or Virgin, whose image adorns the shrine sacred to her in all Catholic churches. It is historically a fact that the old Duke, whose duchy occasioned such dispute at his death (see note, 11), was a Catholic, although his subjects were largely Protestant. Colombe seems to have been brought up in familiarity with Catholic customs.

207. A lion crests him: the device his crest bears is a

208. His 'scutcheon's word: the motto on his coat of arms.

III. 2. Cologne: the ancient and important city of Köln on the left bank of the Rhine, formerly capital of the electorate of the same name, and for a long time one of the most important of the towns belonging to the Hanseatic League.

3. Aix: Aix-la-Chapelle, where the emperors of

Germany were formerly crowned.

4. Frankfort: Frankfort-on-the-Main, where the Roemerberg palace is, in which the emperors of Germany were elected and crowned, and the Diet assembled. — Milan: capital of Lombardy, where the Crown of Italy was conferred, as at Aix and Frankfort that of Germany. — Rome: as the most celebrated of European cities, the centre of imperial rule over the whole world, and the goal of ambition, it stands here as the summit of Berthold's desires in a career modelled upon the Emperor Charlemagne's. See lines 39 and V. 117.

10. Seneschal: the steward of a castle or barony.

63. *Economy*: the old way to spell *economy*.

67. Treves: the ancient Augusta Trevisorum, and Trier of modern Germany, in the valley of the Moselle. Its archbishop was an elector of the German Empire, and the city, therefore, an important one to gain.

71. Amelius: an Italian philosopher of the third cen-

tury belonging to the Neo-Platonic school.

108. Truncheon: staff of office.

261. A pillared flame: Exodus xiii. 12; Numbers xiv. 14.

353. *Emprise*: adventurous enterprise, from Old French *emprise*.

IV. 1. How spring this mine: referring to Guibert's wish, III. 203, leading to this petty plot of the courtiers.

154. Burgraves, Landgraves, Markgraves: the Graf or Count of a burg, being called a Burgraf, etc.; hence the German titles Burgraf, Landgraf, and Markgraf, Englished as above.

157. Chrysoprase: a choice variety of chalcedony,

green in color.

186. Luitpold's brazen self: evidently referring to a bronze statue of this ancient Duke, Valence standing stock-still like it.

V. 117. Charlemagne: the great Emperor of the Franks (742–814), the exemplar of Berthold's dreams.

380. Barnabite: of the order of St. Barnabas.

LURIA

Luria. Act I. Braccio, the Florentine Commissary, through his secretary, Lapo, is sending, on the morning of a decisive engagement between Florence and Pisa, an account of the situation gathered from a report just being concluded by Puccio, Luria's lieutenant-commander. The dialogue reveals that Puccio, having been superseded in the chief command by Luria, has been disposed to carp at his conduct of the war, upon slight occasion, and that Braccio has made the most of this in his despatches, until now, when, seeing how sure of triumph Luria's plans are, the old soldier is moved to praise him unrescrivedly. At his bidding, Braccio dictates to his secretary, Lapo, such a message as would lead Florence to give their general the highest rewards; but as soon as Puccio goes out, Braccio tears the paper, and, although even his devoted sccretary protests against his policy of distrust of Luria, which has brought it about that Luria is secretly being tried and is about to be sentenced by the city he is so successfully serving, Lapo makes an appeal for the reversal of his doom in vain. Braccio almost admits that he agrees with Lapo that the love of this Moorish Luria for Florence is his religion, yet cannot find it wise to trust an alien's disinterestedness when such successful supremacy of importance has proved too much even for Florentines to withstand. Not on the charges by means of which he has made a semblance of a case against him and induced the Signory to carry on the trial, does he himself set weight. The petty errors noted by his discontented rival, his courtesy

to the enemies' general, his attachment for Domizia, whose desire to make use of him to avenge on Florence the punishment it bestowed on her father and brothers, eauses him to be suspected, — all these, useful as they have been with the Signory, do not count with the astute Braeeio. What does count is his distrust of any grosser force than mere intellect in the rulership of Florence. He, who is really the moulder of the will of Florence, having resolved that only intellect shall dominate her course, decrees the death of Luria. Luria, entering with Domizia, hears his name, and shows a shrewdness soon effaced by almost childlike talk of the approaching battle, his love of Florence, and his jealousy of the peace he will be the means of bringing about which will make him useless to her. After arranging with Braeeio that he will only wait till noon for the allies from Lucca to come up, and then join battle, he artlessly questions him if he is not afraid to trust him with the army at his back when peace comes. Instead of disarming Braceio, this only confirms him in his plot against him, and the letter prepared is despatched in duplieate by two messengers.

Act II. discloses Domizia rapturously anticipating, in the triumph of Luria, the moment when Florence will fall upon him as it did upon the heroes of her family, and when he, enraged the more by this contrast with the rewards she has been filling his ears with, will take the revenge of a hireling on the ungrateful city that betrayed its native-born chiefs. Learning from Luria, who enters with his faithful Moor, Husain, that the Pisans have sent an envoy, whom he is about to see, she goes out. After Husain describes the envoy, he also goes out, but not before expressing fiereely his fear of the eold Florentines, who distrust one another, Puecio being made a tool of by Braeeio, Domizia seeking to entrap the Commissary, all selfishly using Luria, who loves them all, and whom he adjures to beware of them. The envoy who enters is Tiburzio himself, the

Pisan general, whose allies have not come, and who knows that his position is desperate. Hc carries one of Braccio's duplicate letters, which he has intercepted. This he urges Luria to read and save himself, offering him Pisa to serve, if he will abandon perfidious Florence. He admits, however, when Luria puts it to him, that he, as a Pisan general, would expect no more from his own city, but he considers that Luria is not bound to Florence as he would be to Pisa, because the Moor is foreign-born. Luria proposes to test his Florentine friends before deciding, and arranges that Tiburzio shall sound his trumpet, when, if his own does not sound the answer, it will be the sign that he accepts the Pisan offer. Luria, left alone, rates Tiburzio's friendship and this offer at their fullest value, and yet decides to trust Florence. When Braccio, Puccio, and Domizia enter, he shows them the unopened letter. Chance, he tells them, has put it in his hands. Shall he open it and learn his reward before fighting? Braccio replies, Yes, if he serve for pay alone, and get his just desert. Domizia cries, Open and take revenge. Tiburzio's trumpet sounds. Luria declares that he will clench the obligation they relieve him from. He tears the paper, and orders Puccio to bid his trumpets answer the Pisan challenge to battle.

Act III. Puccio is reporting to the secretary the result of the victory Luria has just won, making the most of his impetuousness and the necessity to conquer the allies who will come up, later, as faults. Braccio, entering, confers once more in secret with his secretary; still, despite his admiration of Luria's recent action and Lapo's belief in him, pursuing his policy of distrust. The victorious general, coming in with the others, after rejoicing in the acknowledgments he elicits from them of his good service to Florence, asks Braccio for the contents of the letter. What, now, is his reward to be? The Commissary frankly admits his past course, maintaining that Florence is justified in trying Luria,

and, as a state, in ruthlessly testing or destroying any individual life. Pueeio, learning thus, for the first time, how his grumbling has been turned against his leader, protests, and Domizia openly expresses her triumph in learning that the issue between Luria and Florence has been forced. So, from all his Florentine friends Luria gains a revelation of their double dealing toward him. Tiburzio, having been taken prisoner, enters, to bear witness to the trust with which the alien has met their distrust. He now offers Luria the generalship of his forces, — the situation not being so desperate for Pisa, now that the soldiers from Lucea arrive, - leaving to Florence her army, and taking from her only the leader she is about to execute, and to whose rectitude he will himself bear witness in Florence. Braceio seeks to extricate himself from this net by appointing Puccio general in place of Luria, but Puecio refuses, and Luria, master of the situation, deelares his pleasure. Until night, when his sentence is to arrive, he will not rebel; then he will punish Florence. He frees Tiburzio, meanwhile; gives Braecio safe conduct through an army that would rend him in bits, at a sign, if it knew his conduct, and pardons the subtle Domizia.

Act IV. The secretary, discussing with Puccio what Luria's course is likely to be, learns that he is thoroughly awake, now, to his own pettiness and the trickery it has subserved, and so confident both of Luria's worth and power that the prospect for Florence looms darkly. As they pass out, the Moorish general enters with Husain, who is rejoicing in the departure of the Florentine spices and the devotion of Luria's men, and ardently urging him to seize his supreme opportunity and take revenge upon Florence with both armies. As he passes out, Domizia comes in to urge her view of the course for him to take. Not for revenge nor from love of power let him now abolish Florence, but to read corporate life the lesson of humility befitting it before the great individual souls that have nurtured it, and to save such soul growths

of the future from blight. Luria concludes, when he is left alone, that he is set not to serve the purposes of others, but his own, and that it would scarcely serve his own soul to destroy its allegiance to its highest dream of Florence. Taking a phial of poison from his breast, he drinks to the salvation of Florence.

Act V. Luria is charging Puccio with his plans for Florence, which he is about to bequeath him to carry out, when he succeeds him in the chief command. Puccio reminds him, if he is meaning, after submitting himself thus to Florence, to enter Pisa's service, that these plans, which all tend to make Florence supreme, will not be acceptable to his new mistress. When Luria disclaims any such intention, and declares that he has secured a friend potent to save him even from the ruin Puccio fears that Florence will yet wreak upon him, then Puccio, appreciating the value of these plans, and the famous career Luria's ability will open out to him if he adopts and has the name of originating them, refuses to take such honor from the one who deserves it, and proposes to tell Florence the truth about Luria in such a way as to reinstate him fully. Thanking him, and accepting it conditionally, Luria sends for Jacopo. To Jacopo Luria bequeaths another care, if, on consideration, his judgment approve — to investigate the condemnation under which Domizia's heroes rest, and if it is undeserved to exonerate them. Jacopo agrees, declaring, however, that testimony scarcely weighs with him now, since he holds no longer with Braccio and the instructed brain, but with Luria and the leading of the heart he has exemplified. As Jacopo goes, and Luria delights in still another conquest for faith in good, Domizia enters to add her witness to his transforming influence, and Luria learns, too late, not only that she might reward his love, but would comprehend and further his soul's task of thrilling with Oriental fire the slow, cool Western brain. Last of all, Florence recognizes his loyalty. Husain enters, announcing Tiburzio.

He tells Luria that he has cleared his probity at Florence, and Braccio himself, who comes with him, now testifies to Luria's purity of heart. He summons him to begin a new career, wherein every prophecy of his may be fulfilled, save one, — that he would punish Florence. "That also is done," cries Husain, pointing to Luria, dead before them.

Dedication. "Wishing what I write may be read by his light": a citation from the dedication prefixed by John Webster to his drama of "Vittoria Accorambona, or the White Devil." Browning adapts it slightly to his own use in referring only to Shakespeare and Landor, by making Webster's "their light"—namely, Shakespeare's, Dekker's, Heywood's, and others'—"his light."

6. The Signory: the Council of ten governing Flor-

ence.

10. Pisa: its situation eight miles from the mouth of the Arno, on which Florence also was built, made it of importance for Florence to control as its sea-

port.

11. The Lucchese: the soldiers of Lucca, which city, distant fifty miles eastward, was attached to the cause of Pisa at this time, because hopeful of regaining its independence from the dominance of Florence, and also because it had been united a century earlier with Pisa under Castruccio.

15. Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand: Luria's generalship in the successful war of Florence against Pisa, in 1406, is not historical. Professor Henry M. Pancoast, in his papers on "Luria," in Poet-lore, vol. i. p. 555, and vol. ii. 19, was first to point out the passage, in Sapio Amminato's History of Florence, which, doubtless, suggested to Browning the plot and the characters he developed from this hint: "When all was ready, the expedition marched to the gates of Pisa, under the command of Conte Bartoldo Orsini, a Ventusian captain, in the Florentine service, accompanied by Filippo di

Megalotti, Rinaldo di Gian Figliazzi, and Maso degli Albizzi, in the eharaeter of eommissaries of the eommonwealth. For although we have every eonfidence in the honor and fidelity of our general, you see it is always well to be on the safe side. And in the matter of receiving possession of a city . . . these nobles with the old feudal names! We know the ways of them! An Orsini might be as bad in Pisa as a Visconti, so we might as well send some of our own people to be on the spot. The three eommissaries, therefore, accompanied the Florentine general to Pisa." (Bk. xvii.)

Luria, if not true historically, as a hired foreign warrior, one of the mercenary captains frequently employed by the Florentines, and ever, as a matter of policy, regarded with suspicion and beset with spies, is typically

true to the Italian life of the time.

27. Commissary: eommissioner or representative minister of state.

61. Lapo: Braeeio's familiar name for Jaeopo.

121. Did he draw that? one of the plans offered for the completion of the Duomo was for such a Moorish front as Luria is here made to draw. Mr. Ernest Radford unearthed the sketch in a small museum in Florence. His letter about it Dr. Furnivall sent to Browning, who answered that he "never heard nor dreamed there had been any such notion at any time of a Moorish Front for the Duomo — it was altogether a faney of my own illustrative of the feelings natural to Luria and Braeeio, each after his kind."

123. The unfinished Duomo: the famous church of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florenee, begun in 1294 by Arnolfo; its dome by Brunelleschi in 1420; its façade not begun until 1875, and completed in 1887. The famous Campanile or bell-tower of Giotto detached from

it adjoined it.

176. Remembering her whole House's fall: in his paper on "Luria," in Poet-lore, vol. vi., and the "Boston Browning Society Papers," Mr. J. W. Chadwiek sug-

gests that Browning may have found the prototype for the punishment of the Traversari, Domizia's father and brothers, Porzio and Berto (see II. 22-38, III. 291-292) in the fate of the Albizzi, rivals of the Mediei, in 1397. The Albizzi fought the battles of the republic of Florence for her, and extended her dominance over Tusean eities, and after fifty-three years of prominence were accused of treasonable acts, and suffered exile or execution.

383. As the Mage Negro king to Christ the babe: possibly alluding to one of the pietures of the Adoration of Christ by the Magi or wise men of the Orient, which, as early as 1406, were numerous in Florence. See Matthew ii. 1–11.

II. 265. Broke the bread and given the salt: referring to the superstition prevailing among the Arabs that

only with genuine friends may one eat salt.

IV. 25. Our city authorizes . . . Luria's removal and transfers the charge: the ehief eommand of the Florentine forces was twice transferred during the war of 1406 with Pisa, Jacopo Salviati making way for Bertholdo Degli Orsini, and he being ordered for the rapacity of which he was accused to resign his command to Obizzo da Monte Carelli.

201. Him who first ordained . . . Florence . . . should be: Dante's Alighieri (1266–1321), the poet and patriot, whose dreams for Florence influenced her predominance in Italy, and whose share in remodelling her government after the revolution of 1293 was active. He was made prior in 1300, and led several important embassies for her before his banishment.

203. Him a star, too, guided: Beatrice Portinari, Dante's guiding spirit in his soul's progress, described in his Divine Comedy. Domizia, having at last realized Luria's individual worth, would preside over the aspira-

tions of his spirit as Beatriee over Dante's.

V. 27. Pesa . . . Lupo, etc.: the river, town, and heights mentioned for the erection of a chain of towers

and fortifications mark the third enclosure of Florence, completed in 1300.

A Soul's Tragedy

A Soul's Tragedy. Act I. Eulalia, expressing to Chiappino, at nightfall, her growing anxiety over the lengthening absence of her betrothed, Luitolfo, who had left them that afternoon to go to the Provost's house, and objecting to Chiappino's unconcerned silence, elicits from him an outburst of bitter resentment of his He, who is friendless and proscribed, and forced by circumstances to accept benefactions from his fortune-favored friend, Luitolfo, feels within himself the superior clear-sightedness and power of speech of one not tempted by conditions to temporize with social wrongs. He has been bound to silence, he complains, since he would not lic. But now, although Eulalia significantly bids him to keep silence, then, he pours forth his protest against his obligations to be grateful; against his friend's sunnier disposition, and more patient political policy under the despotism of their town's Provost; and, finally, against Eulalia's indifference to his love for her, now expressed, for the first time, in a domincering way, with scorn for her love for Luitolfo as a mere matter of habit. Eulalia, meanwhile, although she declares she never loved him nor guessed that he cared for her, and although she resents his manner and his interpretation of Luitolfo, lets him talk, and listens to him, apparently unwilling to trust her own intuitions, lest she do an unfortunate man and a friend Luitolfo rates high an injustice. She tells him, however, that his hard judgments arise from his failure to understand the circumstances in relation with which the persons whom he condemns act, and that under similar circumstances he would do the same. He declares himself above all such bartering of his soul's liberty for any material good, when the loud knocking of Luitolfo interrupts

them. Eulalia is alarmed. Chiappino mockingly supposes that he has been horribly frightened because the Provost, in his intercession with him for a mitigation of Chiappino's sentence to be exiled, has shrugged his Luitolfo rushes in disordered, and with blood upon him, and Chiappino accounts for it, at once, by supposing that he has been hurt by the Provost, and that this is but what he should have expected of his temporizing. He (Chiappino) will go do justice upon the despot, at once. Luitolfo then announces that he has just killed him. The guards are after him. Let them save themselves. The crowd is seen thronging in front of the house. Eulalia refuses to leave Luitolfo. and is bidding Chiappino to go, when he brings out the passport procured for his own flight that night, gives it, with his disguise, to Luitolfo, and forces his escape. Chiappino declares that he will take Luitolfo's place and die for him, receiving now Eulalia's admiration, though she finds it easier to die so nobly than to stand the stress of living in grief. They turn to meet not the guards, as they suppose, but the populace come to hail their deliverer from the Provost's yoke. They recognize Chiappino, take it for granted that he killed the Provost, and greet him as their Chief. He does not undeceive them. Eulalia's eyes challenge him to declare the truth. He makes her a temporizing answer.

Act II. opens in the market-place with a dialogue between a stranger, who is really Luitolfo in disguise, and the by-standers, from whom he hears the news and no good of himself. They tell him that Luitolfo was probably killed on the same night that the Provost was slain by their noble Chiappino. Luitolfo suggests that he may only have retired to his country-seat, where he could keep track of events, hear how the Provost was only wounded, after all, and how Chiappino himself is likely not to turn out to be a second Brutus the elder. It comes out further in the course of their talk that the papal legate, who came into town the next morning

after the uprising of the people, has been gradually able to effect so much of a change in Chiappino's views that he who had always protested against the office of Provost is that morning to have it conferred upon him, rumor adding, also, that he is to succeed to the estates and the betrothed of his dead friend, Luitolfo. The disguised Luitolfo, withdrawing, says to himself that he now less than ever understands Eulalia's letters. She has written him as if Chiappino were in some danger, and he, therefore, has left his retreat without her knowledge and against her express injunction that he stay until some experiment of hers is concluded. Is he being tricked? He will see them both, he decides, before distrusting them. They enter. Eulalia is saying goodby to Chiappino, and he is defending himself from what she calls the change in his principles, but which he dcclares is merely a wise use of material at hand to build up his better political system. If she cannot understand, it is, indeed, as well for them to part. Has his love, too, changed? she asks slyly. He answers that it has widened. He does not now confuse the distinction between an intellectual desire and a sensual instinct. How is it with his friendship, then, queries the subtle Eulalia, for him to whose deed he owes his present position? He declares that the deed is really his, since he would have done it intentionally, while his friend did it blindly. It belongs to the person who can make use of it, as he will. The Legate entering, a dialogue follows between himself and Chiappino upon the reconciliation of his professed republican principles with his appointment to the provostship, at the end of which it comes out that, besides the submission to Rome involved in accepting the office of Provost, there is a stipulation that he punish the assailant of the late Provost, if he be discovered. Ogniben then publicly announces, as Chiappino falls back aghast, that the new Provost desires to hear who caused the death of the last one. Thereupon Luitolfo avows his deed. Eulalia unites

herself with him, explaining to Chiappino that she was determined to justify her choice of Luitolfo as he has just enabled her to do. The Legate concludes the play by good-naturedly bidding Luitolfo to retire to his own home, and cynically directing Chiappino to the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Act I. 2. Ave-bell: the bell rung about half an hour after sunset (and also at dawn), as a sign to the people

to repeat the Ave Maria, or Hail, Mary.

60. The holy-water drop: from the little vase of water, consecrated by the priest, placed in the vestibule of Catholic churches to dip the finger in, before crossing oneself.

72. Gauntlet-gatherer: one who takes up the gauntlet or glove thrown down by an enemy as a gage or

challenge to battle.

94. Faenza: a little city, anciently the Faventia of the Romans, twenty miles southwest of Ravenna. — They send here a provost from Ravenna: it was governed by Rome, through Ravenna, at this time (see II. 91), it having been annexed to the Papal States in 1509 by Pope Julius II. It now belongs to the Kingdom of Italy, being annexed in 1860, and has a population of over 22,000. Ravenna, about twenty-five miles from Faenza, famous as the exile- and burial-place of Dante, was seized by the Venetians in 1441, and ceded by them, in 1509, to the Pope. It was annexed, also, to the present Kingdom of Italy in 1860.

218. *Economy*: same as "cconomy," with the older English spelling of α instead of e for the Greek diphthong of beginning the word (as in "Colombe's Birthday." III. 63), used here to mean the general make-up or orderly arrangement of the parts of the face which

discontent had put out of order.

231. The Lugo path: the way to Lugo, a town ten miles northward.

281. Scudi: old Roman gold coins nearly equalling the dollar in value.

332. Trip-hook, thumb-screws and the gadge: implements of torture. The trip-hook, like the trip-hammer, probably arranged to swing back and forth; and the gadge a club or goad studded with spikes, though neither is described in the dictionaries; the thumb-

serews arranged to compress the thumbs.

340. Argenta: a little town half-way on the road northward from Lugo, towards Ferrara, thence past San Nicolo: on the road westward, diverging towards Bologna, perhaps making the escape a little indirectly to be safer, and thence northward again to Ferrara: twenty-six miles northeastward from Bologna, and finally to Venice: an independent republic, where one

would be safe from pursuit.

II. 41. Brutus the Elder: Lueius Junius Brutus, whose father and brother were assassinated by Tarquin, King of Rome, and who escaped their fate by feigning idioey. Biding his chance, he roused the people against the Tarquins, drove them from Rome, and established a republic. His disinterestedness here, and in putting his own sons to death, when discovered in an attempt to restore the monarchy, is contrasted with Chiappino's self-seeking.

49. Dico vobis: I tell you.

58. St. Nepomucene: or St. John Nepomuek, the patron saint of Bohemia, whose eapital is Prague.

95. Cur fremuere gentes: the first verse of the second Psalm in the vulgate or Catholie version, "Why do the

people rage?"

104. And, having had a little talk with him: this is the first hint that the Legate knew beforehand who wounded the Provost. Knowing it, it is evident that he would be prepared to distrust Chiappino, and expose him, and, as the event shows (see line 654), to let off Luitolfo leniently.

422. Advocators of change: those who advocate ehange, the obvious meaning. Dr. Rolfe points out

that the word in this sense is Browning's own.

449. Young David, etc.: 1 Samuel xvii. 17, 18.

497. Bastinadoed: cudgelling the soles of the feet, a common Oriental punishment.

509. Profane vulgar: Horace, Odes, iii. 1. 1.

653. "Let whose thinketh he standeth," etc.: 1 Corinthians x. 12.

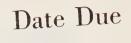












































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